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THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
CHARLES WENTWORTH, Esq.

I N A
S E R I E S O F L E T T E R S .

I N T E R S P E R S E D

With a Variety of IMPORTANT REFLECTIONS,

C A L C U L A T E D

To improve MORALITY, and promote the
ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE.

V O L . II. 1286

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THE
HISTORY
OF
CHARLES WENTWORTH, ESQ.

LETTER I.

TO MISS STANHOPE.

DEAR Sophia!—But pardon the familiarity of this address: even in the midst of distraction I am forgetting your displeasure that has been its cause.—But I will try to recover my wonted calmness.—If that benevolence which is inherent in elevated minds can move you in fa-

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your

vour of an unfortunate youth whom you once honoured with some share of your esteem, and permitted to indulge hopes that no more exist, you will not reject this last epistolary address.

Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banish'd lover or some captive maid :
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul and faithful to its fires. POPE.

This is perhaps the last importunity you will ever receive from one already frantic with disappointment and despair; be not therefore impatient, nor precipitately deny this last letter a perusal.—Open it you undoubtedly will, for I have caused the superscription to be written by an unknown hand, that it might not suffer the fate of a former.—Little did I conceive in the dawn of my passion the train of ills with which it would be attended: but a hopeless passion which neither time or reason will be able to overcome, is far from constituting all
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the evils of my present situation: your tormenting contempt, arising from the imputation of vices of which I am innocent, is more intolerably pungent.—I will descend to nothing mean or artful to extenuate my fault.—That part of my conduct which was really culpable I have already avowed at our last afflicting interview. For the rest, I then denied it; with how much truth, witness heaven!—for to that divine tribunal I dare appeal for the integrity of that part of my conduct.—But how shall I persuade you of my innocence? This is the difficulty that has distracted and drove me to desperation.—Appearances are strong against me.—Let me then be just; let me admire the rectitude, the dignity of your conduct, though misled by artifice and falsehood: nor let me be partial or unjust to your resolutions, though they prove my ruin.—Irrevocably banished from your presence and forbid to hope, what could I do?—Your displeasure was

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insupportable, and your contempt has driven me from my country, my friends, myself, and you, to — desperation, — in short I am now embarked on a voyage to a distant country. — Another hour I am gone — perhaps for ever. — And yet the enterprize in which I am now engaged is nothing but what I once proposed to repair that inequality in my fortune which nature had created, that my pretensions to an union with you might have a more honourable sanction; and could I now flatter myself that I carry with me your wishes for my success, and that my prosperous return would unite me to the most lovely of her sex, how would the reflection animate me to the most vigorous exertions, and fire me with that zeal which surmounts every obstacle; whilst the pleasing anticipation of my future happiness would alleviate the pangs of absence, and the toils and dangers to which I must be exposed in our painful separation? — But, alas! how different

ferent is my present state? how different my sensations and hopes? and how different the sentiments which Sophia entertains of the unfortunate youth, who was once favoured with a share of her esteem? how fallen are his hopes, and how unjustifiable the means by which he now escapes from his country, to abandon, grieve, and dishonour, his family and friends? Distraction!—But it must be so.—I go with secret horror to that vast desert the world, whose confused prospect appears a frightful scene of solitude.—Young as I am, I am destined to renounce felicity—Time irrecoverably past! source of endless inquietude—and thou fallacious Hope, that with thy balmy comfort deceived me, where art thou fled?—Extinguished.—And yet I would hope—vainly hope, that time or accident may hereafter justify my conduct:—perhaps they may:—I am young and may one day merit that regard of which I am now unworthy:—though I cannot command felicity, I will at least endeavour to deserve

it. O that I could prosecute my present enterprize with the exhilarating support of your esteem. How pleasing would my present gloomy prospects appear?—after all, your treatment of me, though just, has been rigid—severely just; and yet I must assure you that my ardent spotless passion will end but with my life; and that after having been permitted to adore an object so divinely amiable, my heart will never descend to receive a second impression.—But why do I mention this assurance—to you who entertain no other sentiments for me but those of contempt. Tormenting thought!—adieu! most amiable of your sex; and to whatever miseries I may be destined, may heaven extend to you all those blessings your innocence and virtue deserve.—Dear Sophia (for so I must still call you) forgive the incoherence of a letter dictated by the distraction of

Your despairing unhappy Lover,

Aug. 4. 1761.

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L E T T E R II.

To Miss CONWAY.

DEAR LOUISA,

TH E reception which (with your approbation), I gave Mr. Wentworth, in consequence of Miss Jackson's letter, join'd to some other difficulties in his situation, have occasioned his rashly leaving England, without the knowledge of his friends, who are in the greatest consternation at this event, especially his mother and brother; as Mr. Clinton informs us, who has sent us copies of his two last letters to his brother, * which I enclose for your perusal; together with one which I have likewise received from him; and in which you will observe the strongest marks of that

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* The letters here alluded to are those of the 16th of July and 4th of August.

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distracted state of mind, which alone could have induced him to a measure of this extraordinary nature, to accomplish which he has had recourse to many arts of deception; but as they are the effects of despair, and besides can injure none but himself, I think they may easily be excus'd.

In the former of these letters you will observe, that he persisted to his brother in a solemn denial of those particulars of Miss Jackson's letter, which were the most culpable; and which perhaps she may have added to excuse the folly of her own conduct, or to induce me to discard him, in hopes of gaining him herself; or perhaps in compliance with her brother's desire, (as he suspects) to gratify his or her own revenge. If so, I fear I have treated him with too much severity: I would gladly believe every thing in his favour: but why these suggestions in his behalf? has she not as good a claim as he, to my belief? are
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the particulars with which she charges him unlikely? are there not many circumstances which tend to confirm them? and was it not natural to expect a denial of them, whether true or false?—I know not what to believe.—Be it however as it may, I pity him.—I fear with some remains of a passion not perfectly extinguished.—I am however endeavouring to forget him, intirely.—Yet should he be able to prove his innocence of those particulars he denies, this endeavour would I believe be fruitless.—But even in that case, pride will not permit him to return, unless his enterprizes meets with greater success than can justly be expected.—But where is my fancy roving?—These, Louisa, you will say, are the suggestions of a passion far from being extinguished: and indeed I find more difficulty than I expected in obliterating the favourable sentiments I once entertained for Mr. Wentworth, which are now become almost habitual. It is not always the lover that is

most regretted, when a woman is obliged to withdraw her affection from him; 'tis the sentiments conceived in his favour; and the charming delusion, that vanishes: 'tis the pleasure of loving; a pleasure so great to a tender susceptible mind, that nothing appears worthy of restoring the joy its indulgence had afforded, and a painful vacancy in the mind arises.—The unhappiness of love arises therefore from the difficulty of suppressing it, when placed on an improper object: without this difficulty, that passion which is now the source of so much misery, would produce only the most exquisite pleasure. I discover in myself, an involuntary propensity to believe him innocent, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary; and am even sometimes weak enough to doubt, whether I have not treated him too rigidly. There are moments of suspense, in which whatever the mind may determine, it will afterwards repent, from a natural propensity to fancy recti-

rectitude in paths unpursued, and happiness in objects unenjoyed. But reason and virtue, as often as I consult their precepts, remove this suspense, and convince me that I ought to withdraw my misplaced affection; and to these I will endeavour to yield obedience: since whatever right people may have to make free with their own happiness, a laudable example is a debt that every individual owes to society; as the vicious certainly contribute to the vices of others, I have in truth, dear Louisa, offered a violence to my own inclinations, by my conduct towards Mr. Wentworth; and discovered the weakness of humanity, or rather my own imbecility; by the difficulty I have experienced, in obliterating the impressions of love; even when they appear to have been made by an unworthy object. But as I am persuaded it is my duty to do it, I will persevere in what I have undertaken, in spite of my rebellious inclinations; being fully resolved on this and

every other occasion, to adhere with undeviating exactness, to that conduct which my reason prescribes; satisfied that whatever may be the consequences of this behaviour, or whatever I may suffer thereby, I shall secure the pleasureable sensations arising from a conscience of having done my duty, sensations that will ever be able to support me in adversity.—Mr. Bernard has again renewed his application to my mother, for leave to visit me as a suitor; but had he all those perfections he has the character of wanting, they would make little impression on me: my late disappointment has given me an aversion to all intercourse on the subject of love. No, Louisa, as I find you have no expectations of being speedily disengaged from that troublesome Benson, we will leave to others the uncertain temporary joys of matrimony, and content ourselves with the less exquisite, but more certain and perhaps permanent pleasures, which must result from a friendship
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so refin'd, so perfect as ours. Think not, Louisa, that any regard to Mr. Wentworth influences me to this resolution; for should he return with all the success which his warmest wishes can prescribe, I seriously declare, that unless he could fully vindicate his innocence, I would never admit him even to the most distant acquaintance.

Miss Jackson I am just informed has fled from the ill treatment of her parents, and it is suspected has recurr'd for procuring the means of subsistence, to those criminal indulgences, which unhappily began, and will now compleat her ruin.

Hasten your return, my dear Louisa, and let us mutually cultivate that pure, and refin'd friendship, with which I have the happiness to be

Your most affectionate

and most devoted servant,

London,
Aug. 15, 1761.

SOPHIA STANHOPE.

LETTER III.

TO MISS STANHOPE.

THAT affection, my dear Sophia, which from the commencement of our acquaintance, has been ever increasing in warmth and purity to its present happy perfection, and which renders a separation from you a painful misfortune, will, you may assure yourself, engage me to hasten my return as much as possible, to the re-enjoyment of those social pleasures which I ever derive from your conversation and friendship.

Your resolution, my dear Sophia, relative to Mr. Wentworth, is consistent with the notions I have ever entertain'd of your virtuous sentiments; which must naturally suggest the indispensable necessity of a virtuous disposition in a man who is to become the partner of an union, which ought to be
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the most perfect that humanity in this state of imperfection can form: would all our sex govern their choice in this important article by motives of virtue only, such is their influence, that a total reformation of manners must necessarily ensue. How glorious to female virtue would be the change; and how worthy of the ambition of rational minds! This would gratify their love of admiration, with the tribute of just and immortal honour; but insuperable obstacles to this noble work, are created by early prejudice confirmed by habit, and the errors of mistaken education, enforced by vicious examples. The mind in infancy is taught to connect the ideas of happiness inseparably with those of affluence, dress, equipage, and a succession of trifling amusements; these mistaken notions are confirmed by the influence of example, and lead us through a succession of follies, which intail ridicule in the pursuit, and end in vexation and disappointment. From
this

this cause, in the choice of a husband, we disregard virtue and real merit, considering only the articles of wealth, as the means of attaining every other requisite, which our deluded imaginations have interwoven in the idea of felicity; and hence that divine institution, which in its origin was the source of the most perfect and permanent happiness, which can be enjoy'd in this our imperfect and transitory state, now prostituted to venal considerations, is often converted into the severest curse; as is apparent from the many unhappy wretches who daily groan beneath its painful yoke. This however by no means impeaches the wisdom or utility of this sacred institution, which to those endow'd with the requisite accomplishments, will still yield happiness sufficient to alleviate the most painful sensations of humanity, and augment every pleasure of life. But till we can participate the felicity of the union with those possessed of the accomplishments necessary

cessary for its attainment, let us indulge the social joys of friendship: if the mind is adorn'd with all those qualities which merit this tender mental connection, of what importance is the sex of the body it inhabits; this is a mere animal consideration, of which perhaps it may however be impossible wholly to divest ourselves, as it results from ideas implanted in our nature for wise and necessary purposes; and which render the joys of matrimony more sublime than those of friendship: the former we may never attain: the latter are now in our power, and their improvement will ever be the study of,

Dear Sophia,

Your most faithful

and affectionate servant,

C—r
Aug. 22 1761.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER IV.

To Miss CONWAY.

I Am highly pleased, dear Louisa, with the disposition your last letter discovers, so favourable to the cultivation and improvement of that friendly intercourse, which has hitherto so happily subsisted between us.

Il est des nœuds secrets, il est des sympathies,
 Dont par les doux rapports, les âmes assorties,
 S'attachent, l'un a l'autre, en se laissant piquer ;
 Par ces *je ne sçai quoi*, qu'on ne peut expliquer.

CORNEILLE.

These lively and elevated descriptions of friendship with which we have been so often charmed, appear wholly romantic on a more intimate acquaintance with mankind, among whom nothing corresponding thereto

thereto is discoverable, except with a happy few, in the sequestered vales of life; far removed from the pursuits of interest or ambition, which have ever been the bane of friendship; and indeed this sentiment can hardly subsist in a state of life so repugnant to the primitive simplicity of mankind; where luxury has produced an universal opposition of interest; and where things desired by all, can be attained but by few. In a state of nature, however, where our wants are few; and those few are easily attainable by all, the views and pursuits of individuals coincide; and a reciprocation of services requires no sacrifice to the shrine of self-interest; in this state friendship retains all the vigour of that romantic ardour which is so much admired and so seldom observed. I flatter myself however, dear Louisa, that notwithstanding our situation, the views of interest or ambition have not sufficient influence on either of our minds, to destroy the purity or intimacy

macy of our mutual affection. I am pleased that my determination relative to Mr. Wentworth has your approbation, which will necessarily confirm me therein; though I must confess that I fear I have not yet fully suppressed every sentiment in his favour; but I flatter myself that time will enable me to acquire that indifference which I cannot yet attain. Mr. Addison, if I mistake not, somewhere says, that a disappointment in love, of all others the most hard to overcome. The passion itself softens and debilitates the heart, and disables it from resisting adversity. In other misfortunes the mind stands collected within herself, and meets their shock with all her natural force. But a heart in love has its foundations sapped, and sinks under the weight of every accident that is repugnant to its favourite passion.—Since the illness of your mother, (of whose recovery I had yesterday the pleasure of being informed) has deprived me of your society, I have,
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in compliance with the desire of my dear parent, received several visits from Mr. Bernard, in the character of a suitor ; but you will easily conceive with how little satisfaction, from the aversion I have lately conceived for all intercourse on the articles of love ; especially with a man, of whom I have long entertained disadvantageous prepossessions ; or at least such as are dissonant to the opinion I have formed of the accomplishments necessary in a lover : and if your notions of humanity are conformable to mine, (which have indeed been regulated by the imperfections of my own disposition) you will judge it so perverse, that a sense of duty or exertion of maternal influence will hardly be sufficient to overcome such considerable obstacles. I know not whether my opinion of him is perfectly just, but in forming it I have endeavoured to divest myself from all prejudice. He is immoderately fond of dress, in which however he displays more of show than
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neatness or propriety. His learning is but superficial, because useful and improving studies have been in some degree neglected for desultory reading; as being most proper to furnish topics of trivial conversation for the idle societies of the gay. An agreeable person and natural vivacity have contributed to inspire him with vanity, which has degenerated into an offensive impertinence, or rather familiarity: He is perfectly acquainted with the whole circle of chit-chat, that round of pretty conversation which means nothing. His ideas are but ill digested, his principles loose; and there is but little of novelty or elevation in his sentiments; for the rest, his family and fortune are unexceptionable, he being, as you already know, the son of a worthy friend to my mother, who is prejudiced in his favour, on account of his father's merit; and who has been teized to dispose me to receive his visits; and though she has complied with his desire, she is sensible there is no
loving

loving out of mere duty ; and I am too well assured of the goodness of her heart, and the justice of her sentiments, to believe she will ever controul my inclinations, or even restrain my choice, except by enlightening it, and supplying by her superior understanding, the inexperience of my own ; and I am so penetrated with gratitude by her confidence, that I will never abuse it, or enter into any engagement without the sanction of her intire approbation. Make my compliments of congratulation to your mother ; and let your opinion ever do justice to the unalterable affection of,

DEAR LOUISA,

Your most faithful,

and devoted friend,

SOPHIA STANHOPE,

LETTER V.

To Miss STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

IN my last I acquainted you with my intention of visiting my brother at this university in my return to town. I was yesterday afternoon at his chambers with my mamma and cousin Harriot, when a gentleman neatly, though gravely drefs'd, of an agreeable person and pleasing countenance, enter'd with the air and freedom of a friend; on observing us he offered to retire, telling my brother he would call again; as he saw him at present so happily engaged: but my brother insisted on his staying, with an earnestness that convinced him he really desired it; and introduced him to us by the name of Mr. Wentworth; a name which from your former connection therewith excited my attention; and I

soon discovered in his features, a resemblance with those of your once dear Charles; they had not indeed that sprightly vivacity so apparent in his countenance, but instead thereof discover'd a most engaging sweetness. His behaviour was of that easy, unconstrained, though modest kind, that constitutes true politeness; and naturally prepossess the mind in its favour: our conversation soon became lively and interesting; as it turn'd on subjects worthy of the entertainment of rational minds, in which Mr. Wentworth supported the greatest share with a delicate propriety of expression and dignity of sentiment, which excited both respect and admiration. After tea we diverted ourselves with walking in the garden of Trinity-college until evening, when Mr. Wentworth took leave: after which we naturally became more particular in our enquiries concerning him. "He said, my brother is the eldest son of major Wentworth, the younger brother

of Henry Wentworth, of ———, esq; a gentleman who has a good fortune, which (as he has no children) will naturally devolve to his nephew, of whom you have been enquiring; and whose father unhappily lost his life by a duel, a little time before his coming to this university, where he has made a very extraordinary progress in all the branches of useful and polite literature, whilst the integrity of his life and manners, with his obliging, discreet, and modest behaviour, have conciliated the esteem of his superiors and the respect of his equals: the levity and imprudence almost inherent in youth, have never been found to betray him into one act that malice itself could censure: nature in him has been directed by virtue; and he has been able to obey her precepts without constraint or precaution: that candour which engages confidence, and that rectitude of manners which impresses respect, have

have in him the free ease of habit. But though his own conduct is irreproachable, no one can be more ready to extenuate and pardon those faults in others which are not the effect of relentless malevolence. In short, an enemy to vice without pride, indulgent to follies without contracting them, complaisant to innocent customs, but incorruptible by vicious examples, he swims on the tide of life, beloved by all, even those to whom his blameless life is a reproach. Nor is there any thing in his character to obscure the lustre of his merit, but the want of desire to display it, and a certain timidity of heart that hinders him from pushing his talents with vigour into active life. His amiable character however has procured him a fellowship in— college, and not long since he received holy orders ; and is now appointed chaplain to the bishop of—— who will doubtless reward his uncommon merit.” How amiable his character, my dear Sophia !

How striking the contrast between Mr. Wentworth and that fordid empty Benson! —Did not the deception to which I have once been the dupe, teach me the danger of a precipitate confidence in favourable appearances; and did not my unhappy engagements forbid my indulging a thought of quitting my virgin state, I would prefer the man who justly merited the encomiums my brother has bestowed on Mr. Wentworth, with the bare conveniencies of life only, to any other person I ever saw, with all the splendid allurements of wealth and power.

Think not, Sophia, I feel any particular attachment to Mr. Wentworth, more than what the commendations of my brother ought to create in favour of a virtuous character; perhaps he may not deserve particular attachment; or, if he does, my present situation excludes every thought of a more tender connection than that
which

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which is the result of our happy friendship.

I enquired of my brother whether Mr. Wentworth had received any intelligence of his brother since his departure, and am informed he has not, and is in the greatest uneasiness on that account; esteeming his silence an implication of his being in an unhappy situation. We shall set out for London on Thursday, where I hope in person to give you the most tender assurances of that unlimited affection with which I ever am,

DEAR SOPHIA,

Your most faithful,

and most devoted friend,

Cambridge,
April 3, 1763.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER VI.

To Miss CONWAY.

BY your's * of yesterday I perceive, dear Sophia, that Mr. Wentworth's visits to your brother since his leaving the university have brought you acquainted with him, and I have particularly remarked the encomiums you bestow on his sentiments and understanding; from which I suspect you are in danger of imbibing a too early prepossession in his favour. Excuse my freedom when I tell you that I fear you do not preserve sufficient caution on this subject: you have a heart disposed for love and every virtuous affection; and though you may now flatter yourself that you have conceived no other sentiments

* This letter does not appear.

than those of bare esteem for his merit, you may find yourself mistaken. It will ever be necessary to guard against him whose conquest would be most agreeable to you, as the very reasons which determine your choice are so many instances of your danger; and you should be alarmed, when you not only receive particular pleasure from his conversation, but are assiduous to please; and find yourself, at his approach, adjusting your gloves, counting the sticks of your fan, or affected by any other involuntary emotion or sensation. Friendship and esteem are the bearded arrows of love, that enter with ease, but, when torn from the heart, leave a greater wound.—An accident has lately intervened that will restore to Miss H—— that character and reputation of which she has been unjustly deprived, by the villainy of one man, and the malicious credulity of a world ever disposed to believe every rumour which can blast female reputation.

The unfortunate Miss H—— saw herself despised by her own sex, and abandoned by the other, through the villainy of a wretch who, from resentment and ostentation, boasted of favours he had assiduously but unsuccessfully sought; and the lady having no male relation to punish the author of this false and injurious aspersions, became the victim of undeserved censure, while her traducer exulted with impunity. —She saw herself rejected by the virtuous, but abhorred the vicious, and, rather than consort with them, endured the pangs of solitude; and, though oppressed with infamy, persevered in that virtue of which the world denied her even the semblance; regarding it for its own sake, not its applause.—A dangerous illness, from which her traducer is now recovering, and his apprehensions of an approaching death, awaked him to a painful sensibility of the injustice and villainy of his conduct, and compelled him, in some degree, to repair
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the injury she suffered by confessing the falsity of his pretensions to her favours.— His apprehensions of death were, indeed, premature; but they have proved the happy instrument of vindicating the innocence of injured virtue, and teaching the world the injustice of its propensity to believe every aspersion on female reputation.

—I can write nothing concerning myself, but that my late disappointment, together with the instances I so frequently discover of suffering virtue and triumphant villainy, have given me a disgust for the world; though nothing but death shall ever dissolve the friendship of your

SOPHIA STANHOPE.

LETTER VII.

TO MR. EDWARD WENTWORTH.

IF you, dear brother, attended to the particulars of my last letter; and if that fraternal affection of which I was once the happy object, remains unimpaired by the indiscretion of my former conduct, the sight of this will afford you some pleasure; as, without examining its contents, you will esteem it as an assurance of the success of my enterprize; of which you have doubtless formed unfavourable conclusions from my long silence.

Soon after finishing my last to you from the Downs, we joined the fleet bound to Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, under the convoy of two of his majesty's ships of war:

Littoræ

Littora tum patriæ, lachrimans portusque relinquo.

Incertus quo fata ferant, ubi sistere detur. — VIRG.

To find the land disappear, the ships alternately rise and fall with the ascending and descending waves, to hear the wind whistle through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses the most hardy, and to reflect that nothing but a plank separated me from a watery grave, excited the most uneasy sensations. Extremes are but too natural to humanity : I, who had been before elated with pleasing expectations of a most successful enterprize (which had no reasonable foundation) was now agitated by fears as groundless; and the despondency they produced, augmented by the disordered state of those material organs on whose soundness and integrity health of mind necessarily depends, reduced my thoughts to a state of anarchy and confusion. To this let me add, that the grief of leaving every thing dear behind me, and my inhumanity

in afflicting the best of parents and brothers, by a departure of this clandestine and precipitate nature, aggravated as it was by several disagreeable circumstances, suggested the most painful reflections.—The pathos of nature revolted against my conduct, and painted it in very disagreeable and affecting colours.—But time, the grave of affliction, insensibly sheathed the poignance of my grief; and, before the voyage was compleated, my mind had received a more tranquil state. During our passage we discovered several of the enemy's ships; but our convoy deterred them from giving us any disturbance. Our voyage proved long, occasioned by the necessary delay of waiting for those of the fleet who were but indifferent sailors: however, this inconvenience was amply repaid by the safety and pleasure which we mutually derived from this association. As we approached the Tropic, the mildness of the weather frequently enabled us to visit each other;
which

which afforded no small satisfaction to those who were in a state of temporary separation from the society of the rest of mankind. As we drew near the island of Barbadoes we were, on all sides, surrounded by immense numbers of flying fish, which are the principal support of the poor of this island *. The evening before our arrival it was very cloudy, and we could not discover any land; but though the fleet brought to at eight o'clock, yet before the dawn of day we discovered the island at the distance of a league only, and several of the headmost ships were but a small distance from a shoal of rocks called *Cobblers Rocks*, at the south-east end of the island, and on which we had been in imminent danger of being shipwrecked: but, this being escaped, we indulged our-

* Since the year 1762 these fish have quitted the sea adjacent to this island.

selves in the prospect of land, which we had not before enjoyed for eight weeks.

This island, from the sea, makes a very agreeable appearance; its gently rising hills, and moderately descending vales, covered with verdant crops of canes, and groves of fruit-trees loaded with their ripening produce, and at a season when all nature, with you, is withered and languishing, affords a most delightful prospect. Before noon we all safely anchored in Carlisle Bay; and I soon discharged myself from the ship, landed my baggage, and provided lodgings. My precaution in procuring recommendatory letters proved of the utmost service to me in attaining employment. There are on this island two or three regular physicians, and about as many apothecaries, who confine themselves to the employment of their particular branches. The other medical gentlemen are stiled practitioners, and officiate indiscriminately,

criminate, either as physicians, surgeons, or apothecaries, for the plantations, from which they receive salaries of about five shillings per annum for each slave.

Mr. G——s, one of the practitioners, through the gout and other infirmities, was disabled from attending his practice, which had been very extensive; but, through the ignorance or negligence of his substitutes, was daily diminishing at the time of my arrival here, and he began to apprehend a total defection of the different plantations, unless he could engage in his employment a person of abilities, who would exert the most diligent and assiduous endeavours for retrieving his declining practice.

A gentleman, to whom I had brought a letter of introduction, and who was intimately acquainted with Mr. G——s, proposed my engaging in this undertaking;

to which I readily assented, and obtained it, through his recommendation and my testimonials, on terms very advantageous: Mr. G——s obliged himself to allow me a salary at the rate of 150 l. per annum, with board, washing, and lodging: I did not, however, think this an acquisition worthy of my leaving England; and therefore delayed writing until I should find myself in a more advantageous situation, to obtain which I resolved to exert the utmost diligence and hazardous efforts. Pride and ambition are the most powerful incentives, and they produced in me the most happy effects. There is no passion of the mind which produces more different effects, than that of ambition: a love of glory, in a virtuous mind, will ever prove advantageous to society, as it is the most fruitful source of noble and virtuous actions; but, when this passion is accompanied with a vicious disposition, the desire of gratifying it will naturally be attempted
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by unjust and wicked means; and hence it will become productive of the most pernicious designs: me it rendered obstinately diligent and assiduous in endeavouring to deserve the approbation and esteem of my employer, and of his employers; in which I succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations. The success of several capital and hazardous operations, which a desire of signalizing myself induced me to undertake, by giving them an advantageous idea of my abilities, perfected that esteem which my care and diligence had before inspired; and, in less than three months, I not only recovered all the practice which Mr. G——s had before lost, but also made a considerable addition thereto. Sensible of my importance, I then resolved to improve the favourable opportunity which the necessity of my services afforded for obtaining more advantageous conditions, especially as Mr. G——s's infirmities daily augmented. I therefore signified a
reso-

resolution of removing to Jamaica, in quest of a more profitable employment; hereupon Mr. G——s, to engage me to a continuance with him, offered to augment my salary, first to 200 l. afterwards to 250 l. and finally to 300 l.

All this I refused; he then offered to admit me to a partnership with him, and allow me to share the profits of our practice, amounting to about eleven hundred pounds per annum, on condition of my undertaking the discharge of the whole; with this proposal I have complied; and, though my employment is extensive and fatiguing, yet the ambition of returning home with wealth and honour, to partake the esteem and society of my friends, by retrieving the errors of my youth, will enable me with chearfulness to undergo all the toil and hardship which my constitution can support.

Mr.

Mr. G—— is a gentleman of good disposition and natural abilities, which, however, has not been duly cultivated, though his education has been as liberal as this island affords. Learned educations are not acquired in the West Indies. They have, indeed, a college in this island, founded by Col. Codrington, for the support of which a plantation is appropriated, and is under the direction of the society for propagating the gospel; but it never yet produced a scholar with even a tolerable knowledge of the languages; and all those gentlemen who mean to instruct their children in any thing more than writing and accounts, send them either to Europe or the northern colonies. Mr. G——s has an only child, a daughter of about fifteen, but she is arrived at greater maturity than ladies of eighteen in England; this is usual in all countries between the Tropics. Miss G——s's person and features are really pretty, her complexion, however,

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is defective, and her natural sense and dispositions have been but little improved by education; and, by conversing with the negro servants, she has acquired an habit of imitating their language and pronunciation. All these, however, are imperfections common to the ladies of these islands; who are, however, modest, and uncommonly temperate, rarely drinking any thing but water, even at meals, and, whenever either wine or spirits are used by them, they are largely diluted therewith: dram-drinking is never practised but by slaves and the very lowest of the men; and to offer a woman in this island a dram would be a greater affront than an attempt on her virtue, though they are not less chaste here than in Europe; and in this I could wish they were imitated by my fair countrywomen, since there is no vice, not even immodesty itself, more odious in the female sex than intemperance, or more repugnant to that softness and delicacy which are the
source

source of our esteem. Miss G——s will be entitled to a considerable fortune; and I have a more rational cause than my own vanity to believe, that she sometimes thinks of me with more than bare indifference; neither do I think that Mr. G——s would oppose an union, which would certainly procure me an advantageous establishment. But I, who have known the perfections of the amiable, the *lost* Sophia, whose image is ever with me, and who have been permitted to hope for all that heaven of joys which must result from the possession of every thing virtuous and lovely in woman, can never think of uniting myself with another, while there remains a bare possibility of ever recovering that place in her esteem from which I am so unhappily fallen: of this reason tells me there is no probability; and yet, without the hopes of it, life would be joyless. However, be my destiny what it may, humanity and benevolence require me to take
every

every opportunity of discouraging this growing passion, which is very apparent in Miss G——s, but which I have never endeavoured to inspire, as I am now sensible, that *the man who artfully engages the affections of a woman, without the power or intention of making an equal return, is the author of an irreparable injury; since the difficulty of eradicating entirely a misplaced passion, often proves the source of an age of unhappiness*; and shall therefore take the first occasion of acquainting her, in an undesigning manner, with my prepossessions.

This island, of all others in the West-Indies, is the most improved and best peopled, and consequently the most improper for European adventurers; since its own natives emigrate to other colonies, though the number of its black and white inhabitants has considerably diminished within twenty years past; but it is still immense, considering the small spot of earth

to

to which they are confined; the whites being computed at twenty thousand, and the negroes at eighty thousand; whilst the land of the whole island amounts to no more than one hundred and six thousand five hundred acres, which is but little more than one acre to each inhabitant. This is a degree of population to which but few countries have arrived: its inhabitants are indeed partly supplied with provisions from Europe and the northern colonies; but the value of this supply does not amount to one third part of the sugar and other commodities which are constantly exported to other colonies, where the opulent planters are maintained in the height of luxury and extravagance; and, was its produce applied only to the nourishment of its inhabitants, it might doubtless support three times its present number; but unhappily its soil is so exhausted by long continued cultivation, that a part of those lands which were formerly appropriated for the
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production of canes, are now reserved for the purpose of feeding cattle for obtain-manure, a portion of which is placed in every hole in which the canes are to be planted. The climate of this island is also the most healthy and agreeable of any between the Tropics: the cool, refreshing influence of the trade-wind, which ever blows, agreeably allays the heat, which is sometimes troublesome at mid-day; however, at that time but few white people are exposed to the influence of the sun, the morning and evening being the times of recreation and business, for all except slaves and a very few of the inferior people; and, indeed, there are but few whites here who live by hard labour, mechanic tradesmen doing little else than directing and overseeing the slaves: indeed, laborious employments but ill agree with European constitutions in this climate; and without the slave-trade (the justice of which I shall not at present discuss) you in Europe would

would want those luxurious productions of the Indies, which indulgence has rendered necessary for your vitiated appetites.

The number of slaves here, and in most other parts of the West Indies, is at least four times greater than that of the whites; for which reason they are treated with a degree of severity which, to an European, has the appearance of cruelty; but the necessity of this treatment soon becomes apparent, and has been taught by long and dangerous experience. The least idea of liberty is incompatible with slavery; and it becomes a necessary act of self-preservation, by a rigid treatment, to banish from their minds even the most languid hopes of ever attaining a state of freedom: this, indeed, is not only conducive to the security of their masters, but their own happiness: the impossibility of obtaining destroys the desire of liberty; and, looking upon that as a blessing appropriated only to whites, they

content themselves with the humble enjoyments which even slavery affords; and, in this state, the chearfulness of their tempers demonstrates that they enjoy as much real happiness as their masters. The coarseness of their food, which consists of dried fish, maize, yams, plantins, and potatoes, is supplied by the relish of a keen appetite; and from these the strength of their digestive faculties enables them to derive nutriment sufficient to sustain the most laborious toil, in the most debilitating climate. The lives of the slaves are, in some degree, in the hands of their masters, since the punishment annexed to the putting them to death is but pecuniary. Yet, notwithstanding the awful distance at which the negroes are kept, the gentlemen very frequently descend to the most familiar converse with their black and mulatto female slaves; though, with the other sex, the case is far different; for, should a white woman yield to a commerce of this nature
with

with a negro, she would be deemed a monster of inhumanity; and a negro, who should aspire to such a familiarity, would be punished with the most cruel severity. Mr. W—ll—x, a planter of this island, not long since buried a negro alive for this crime on his niece. But, notwithstanding this intercourse between the gentlemen and their female slaves (which does not much offend the ladies) yet the former never enter into a state of matrimony with negro women, let pecuniary advantages be ever so great; such an act would be an insuperable disgrace: and, indeed, this distinction of colours is necessary, to preserve in the slaves that fear and respect on which their subjection depends.

The inhabitants of this island, especially the planters, are distinguished for their hospitality; and entertain not only their friends, but strangers, in the most liberal

manner: they have, however, too generally adopted an ill custom of pressing their guests to intemperance; which has been attended with fatal effects. Their tempers are lively, volatile, hasty, impatient and obstinate; dispositions constitutionally generated by the climate, and confirmed by the habit of governing with the most arbitrary despotism, and of exacting, from early infancy, the most unlimited submission and obedience from the slaves with which they are surrounded; together with that licence of manners which is universally tolerated among them. Add to this, they are fickle and inconstant; which prevents their application to arts and sciences with that attention necessary to any considerable progress: hence men of profound erudition are never found among the natives of tropical countries, unless they have received a foreign education.—The women in this climate commonly
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blend vivacity and impatience with great indolence.

Saint Michael's, or Bridge-town, is the capital and only town of any consideration on this island; its plan is very irregular; it may, perhaps, contain about 1000 houses, indifferently built of brick, and covered with tiles: at the distance of a mile is Pilgrim, an elegant mansion, which is the residence of the governor; and which is agreeably situated on a gently-ascending hill, which commands an agreeable prospect.

I must now tell you, my dear brother, that, except the uneasiness which my absence from my friends occasions, I am tolerably happy; I have acquired a valuable acquaintance with persons of merit, which has taught me the injustice of those prepossessions we are too apt to conceive

to the disadvantage of every country except our own; and I am now convinced, that a prudent and benevolent conduct will acquire friendship and esteem in every nation and clime.

I have extended this letter to a tedious length, in hopes of engaging you, by my example, to a minute detail of all the various particulars which you must naturally suppose me impatient of knowing: acquaint me with the sentiments of my friends, especially my mother and yourself, concerning my imprudent enterprize; tell me whether I may hope for the forgiveness of that dear parent, or whether I am to be abandoned, as a rash, undutiful son. Let me beg you, in my name, to assure her, that, *instructed by misfortunes, and the severe lessons of unerring experience*, I shall diligently avoid every allurements of vice, and seriously endeavour to repair the

errors

errors of my past conduct, and deserve, in some degree, the happiness of that affection which I fear my indiscretions have forfeited. I must likewise desire you to enquire into, and inform me of the situation of Miss Jackson: since, notwithstanding the malicious aspersions with which she has injured me, I would willingly make her any reparation that is not incompatible with my own happiness; and hope, in a few months, to be able to remit you a sum of money for her use, which the condition in which I left her may, perhaps, render necessary. Should it be in your power to afford me any information relative to Miss Stanhope, I need not tell you how acceptable it will be.

I must again entreat you to assure the best of parents, of that dutiful affection which I shall ever entertain for her; and believe, that neither time, nor distance of

situation, has impaired the love and tenderness with which I shall unalterably continue,

Dear Brother,

Your most affectionate

and devoted

Barbadoes,
March 10, 1762.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

To Miss STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

SINCE your rural excursion, my brother arrived in town from Cambridge, having finished his studies at that university; and as Mr. Wentworth has likewise been in town, the friendship subsisting between them has several times afforded me the pleasure of his company; and I am fully convinced, that the character I formerly received of him from my brother, was by no means unequal to his merit: the purity and rectitude of his life and manners, are worthy of that religion of which he is a teacher. He discovers the most refined notions of the beauty of truth, virtue, and moral aptitude, agreeable to which (if I may rely on disinterested testi-

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mony) he regulates the actions of his blameless life. In him I have an example of politeness without affectation, learning without pedantry, and piety without austerity or ostentation: qualities which are blended with an engaging, benevolent, and charitable temper, that is an ornament to humanity. After having enumerated these accomplishments, I fear you would not believe me, if I should tell you, that I behold them with indifference: and, as the conditions of our friendship mutually engage us to unreserved communication, and, as I am resolved never more to betray a want of confidence in my friends, I will confess (such is the weakness of humanity) that not all the influence of reason, or past experience, has enabled me to preclude from my mind sensations of a more tender and refined nature than those of bare esteem; though I cannot promise myself an equal return to these more than favourable sentiments: was this difficulty removed,

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by an assurance which would not be disagreeable, and myself delivered from the restraints of my former engagements, I should willingly encourage this growing passion, which I now strive in vain to suppress; since, in this dissolute age, such a companion through the mazy pursuits of life, as I doubt not but Mr. Wentworth would prove, would be an invaluable blessing. I cannot, however, conceal (as I intended) the pleasure I feel at believing that I have discovered in him symptoms of a passion similar to my own; yet I dare not confide in my own judgment, sensible as I am how apt we are to construe every appearance agreeable to our wishes.

Mr. Wentworth informs me, that he has just received a letter from his brother, in which he acquaints him of his being happily settled in the island of Barbadoes, where he expects for some time to continue. I introduced the subject of his late

acquaintance with you, and was told that he had mentioned you in this letter to his brother in the most respectful terms; but that, though his passion was no ways diminished, he despaired of ever attaining that place in your esteem to which he had once aspired. Indeed, Sophia, from the infamous behaviour of Miss Jackson since his departure, I am inclined to believe, that her disposition, naturally, is not strictly virtuous; and consequently, that it is not unlikely that she may have unjustly aspersed his character. But what am I saying! it is presumption in me to determine a question involved in such intricate uncertainty.

My mamma's infirm state of health will shortly occasion us to quit this metropolis, which at this season becomes disagreeable, for the rural pleasures of S——; so that it is uncertain when I shall next have the satisfaction of seeing you: but, in the interim,

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 61

terim, let the frequency of our epistolary intercourse compensate, as much as possible, for the interruption of our personal interviews; and assure yourself, that the favourable sentiments which I entertain of Mr. Wentworth, have no ways diminished that friendship which is so essential to the happiness of,

My dear Sophia,

Your most faithful

and affectionate

London,
June 10, 1762:

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

To Miss STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

YOUR favour* is just come to hand, and is rendered infinitely agreeable by the promise it contains of a visit from you at S——; which I must beg you will not protract until the time you propose, as my present impatience of seeing you convinces me how insupportably tedious another month's absence will prove.

I lament, with you, the unhappy fate of Mrs. M——s; and am surprized that the reiterated instances of shame and misery, which so frequently result from the mis-

* This letter is omitted.

conduct of parents sacrificing the honour and happiness of their posterity to low, avaricious motives, are not sufficient to teach them to content themselves with guiding, or, at most, with negating the inclinations of their children, when their future felicity so much depends on their indulgence. How great soever may have been the affliction of Mrs. M——s, or whatever miseries she may yet be destined to suffer during the remainder of her wretched life, those of her parents, from whom they are derived, if they retain any virtuous sensibility, must be equally poignant.

I entirely concur with you in your sentiments and resolutions concerning Mr. Charles Wentworth; and think it unlikely, that a person educated with all the advantages of moral instruction and virtuous example, could prove so very different from his brother, as to deserve the aspersions contained in Miss Jackson's letter: however,

ever, could his innocence be justified to your satisfaction, I think it improbable, as he is advantageously settled abroad, that there will ever be an union between you: gaiety of youth, distance of situation, long-continued absence, and variety of objects, joined to his despair of ever recovering your esteem, will be sufficient motives to recal his passion, which may be placed on some other object. It may now be your own interest to suppress the remains of that passion which motives of virtue have not been able entirely to eradicate.

Your aversion to Mr. Bernard is just: he is but a wretched distributor of second-hand observations, ridiculously aping the follies of the great. But yet, among all the train of your admirers, there may certainly be found one man who may deserve your affection: merit so conspicuous, so eminently distinguished as yours, can never pass unnoticed by men of virtue; such
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there still are, notwithstanding the barrenness of the present age in their production.

Since my last Mr. Wentworth's visits are become very frequent; and I have the pleasure of being able to inform you, that my conjectures relative to his sentiments were not ill founded. He this morning breakfasted with us, and some-how our conversation turned on the advantages and inconveniencies of marriage, in its present perversion; from thence, by a natural progression, Mr. Wentworth politely introduced the subject of his passion for—your friend; which he declared with a delicacy of expression and sentiment peculiar to himself: adding, he was sensible that he aspired to a blessing he could not pretend to merit, and at a time when even his own situation would necessarily produce obstacles to the attainment of his wishes; the consideration of which had occasioned his

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endeavouring to suppress them in their infancy; but that his endeavours for that purpose had only exposed the strength of his passion, and the inability of his reason to repress its suggestions.—I answered, feeling that he did not proceed, that I thought myself particularly honoured by the favourable sentiments he professed to entertain of me; but desired to be excused from explaining my own, till I was acquainted with those of my mother and brother on this subject: adding, that as they had affectionately forgiven the imprudence of a different behaviour, on a former occasion, I was determined never to furnish them with a second opportunity of exercising their propensity to forgiveness, on this subject. Upon this, they both declared that they had been previously acquainted with Mr. Wentworth's passion, which had their entire approbation, and wishes for his success. I then perceived they were all combined together for my own good.

How

How pleasing are these combinations of our friends, for effecting a purpose so agreeable to our own inclinations? I was agreeably suspended by a pleasing confusion: but, recovering myself, I frankly, though not without blushes, declared, that the amiable character I had received of him from my brother, confirmed by my own observations, had convinced me, that he was in every respect worthy of my highest esteem: but that the only foundation of that ardent and permanent affection which is necessary to the happiness of a married state, was a more intimate and perfect knowledge of the merit of each other, than either of us could yet have acquired; and that, besides, though my affections were perfectly disengaged, my former indiscretion had created an almost insuperable obstacle to any new engagement; but that, if this could be removed, Mr. Wentworth, of all men I had yet known, appeared most likely to become
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the object of my choice.—“ Sister,” interrupted my brother, “ I have already acquainted Mr. Wentworth with the contract into which you have been deluded, and will undertake, by some means, to disengage you therefrom; and am persuaded your sensibility will discover and do justice to the merit of my friend; who, I flatter myself, will hereafter discover no cause to retract the esteem he has conceived for you: and let me, from hence, indulge the pleasing hope of an happy union between two persons so dear to me.” I replied, that I should not oppose his desires, if, upon a more perfect acquaintance with Mr. Wentworth, neither of us found reason to change our present opinions, and Mr. Benson could be induced to relinquish my former engagement.

After Mr. Wentworth's departure, I enquired of my brother what circumstance, in his situation, Mr. Wentworth had al-
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luded to, and considered as an obstacle to his wishes? He told me, it was his present want of fortune; his uncle being likely to live for some time, and he being unwilling to diminish that fund which was now his mother's provision. Besides, it would become necessary for him to relinquish his fellowship in —— college (which now afforded him a genteel support) upon marriage. But these obstacles, my brother concluded, was not of any great importance, as my own fortune would sufficiently remove them at present.

Thus, Sophia, I am advancing fast to a new engagement, before I am discharged from an old one; which I fear will not be so easily effected as my brother imagines; who is not so well acquainted with the wretched mercenary disposition of Benson, as I have unfortunately had occasion to be: pity I had not discovered it earlier. I think, however, that I am in no danger
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of a second imposition from Mr. Wentworth: his unblemished character, supported by the concurrent disinterested testimony of all who know him, together with the severe scrutiny of a long acquaintance, to which I shall subject him, will, I think, afford me all the security of his real merit, that is attainable *in a world in which we are all, in some degree, dissemblers.*

We shall depart for S—— on Monday; where, on my arrival, I hope to receive an assurance of your speedily affording me the happiness of a visit; which will be impatiently expected by,

My dear Sophia,

Your ever faithful

and affectionate friend,

London,
June 20, 1762.

LOUISA CONWAY.

L E T T E R X.

TO MR. CHARLES WENTWORTH.

YOU rightly conjectured, dear Charles, that your last letter would afford me satisfaction; as that affection which I have always felt for you, has been in no degree impaired by the indiscretion of your former conduct.—Our dear parent was, indeed, both grieved and surprized at your secret and precipitate departure from your country and friends; but she forgives your misconduct, rejoices to hear of your happy settlement in Barbadoes, and wishes you the continuance of all possible success; and to her wishes allow me to join my own, for your prosperity: and as I flatter myself that any intelligence of my own success in life will give you pleasure, I shall inform you, that, since your departure, I have been admitted to holy orders,
and

as well as to a fellowship in —— college, Cambridge; and have also been appointed chaplain to the bishop of ——, with whom I now reside. I have likewise commenced an acquaintance with, and conceived a passion for, a young lady of great merit: but,

——“ not her on Paphian plains admir'd,
The bold, the pert, the gay.”——

To this you will readily assent, when I tell you it is no other than Miss Conway, the friend of your beloved Sophia.—I was prejudiced in her favour by the character given of her in one of Mrs. Clinton's letters to my mother (and by the favourable mention you have made of her) before chance gave me an opportunity of seeing and conversing with her at her brother's chambers in —— college; when I found reason to believe, that my former ideas were in no respect adequate to the extent of her personal and acquired accomplishments.

ments.—The intimate friendship which had long subsisted between her brother and myself, has given me many subsequent opportunities of becoming acquainted with her perfections, since his leaving the university; and, in spite of all my precautions, I am confirmed in a violent passion for her, with which I acquainted her brother, who generously offered me his interest for promoting its success. I then thought it most consistent with honour and decorum, first to declare my intentions to Miss Conway, and obtain her approbation also: accordingly, I waited on that lady a few days since, and informed her of my passion for her daughter, and desired the honour of being received as her suitor. Mrs. Conway told me, that, from the character she had received of me from her son, she knew of no person with whom her daughter could expect to be happier, or with whom she would more willingly see her united: that, if she attended to the sug-

gestions of her own partial happiness, they would oppose her daughter's union with any person, however elevated or deserving, as she should thereby be necessarily deprived of the pleasure of her society and conversation: but that her own felicity was so intimately connected with her daughter's, that the satisfaction she should feel at seeing her happily established in that state which ought to be the object of female ambition, would, in a great measure, supply the loss of her society; as true affection, insensible to interested views, invariably seeks the good of the beloved object. She added, that she supposed I was acquainted with the engagement to which her daughter's inexperience had suffered her to be deluded by the arts of an unworthy man, and which might prove a temporary obstacle to my wishes. By this she alluded to Miss Conway's engagement with Mr. Benson; of which you have doubtless heard, and of which her brother

ther had before informed me.—Breakfast was now ready—Miss Conway and my friend entered.—The conversation at first was general; I contrived, however, to divert it, by natural and easy transitions, to the subject in which I was more particularly interested; and then informed Miss Conway of my passion. She modestly and politely declared, that she thought herself honoured by the favourable sentiments I professed to entertain of her, but declined explaining her own sentiments till she was acquainted with those of her mother and brother; adding, that, as they had forgiven her former deviation from duty, on a subject of this nature, she was resolved never to afford them a second opportunity of exercising their propensity to forgiveness on a similar subject.—They both declared in my favour.—She then mentioned her engagement.—From this her brother undertook to free her.—She then, with as much frankness as her blushes and the he-

sitation of modesty would permit, declared, that the favourable character she had received of me from her brother (you will observe, that my friend had every where prepared the way for me) confirmed by her own observations, had so prepossessed her in my favour; that, if the obstacle of her engagement could be removed, it appeared most likely that I should become the object of her choice. I need not tell you the satisfaction I have received from this declaration.—As I shall have occasion to write to you again in a few days, I shall at present only assure you of the unalterable affection of

Your, &c.

London,
Sept. 10, 1762.

EDWARD WENTWORTH.

LETTER

L E T T E R X I.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR SIR,

YOU are not unacquainted with my sentiments on the injurious practice, too frequent with many of our sex who endeavour to impose on the credulity of the fair, by feigned protestations of love, calculated to engage their affections, and render them unhappy, for no other end but to gratify their vanity of admiration: of a similar nature is the present fashionable gallantry, of entertaining the fair sex indiscriminately, and upon all occasions, with idle professions of love, and unmeaning encomiums on their beauty; which, though the intention is less criminal, I have long thought productive of consequences not less pernicious than the former practice;

and as I esteem it a *duty incumbent on mankind, not only to think, but act, aright*, I some time since resolved to avoid this fashionable levity; but had the mortification to find, that my adherence to this resolution was attributed to stupidity, ignorance, or impoliteness, by that sex whose interest had influenced me thereto. How unhappy is it, that they will thus become accessary to each other's misfortunes! I then perceived the folly of opposing the torrent of a fashionable custom, and, to preserve my own character, determined to imitate the example of others, in flattering their vanity at their own expence. A few months ago, when I had just adopted this resolution, I was invited to pass a few weeks in the family of a gentleman for whom I entertained the highest respect, as a long friendship had subsisted between him and my father. He had an only daughter, whose great beauty and fortune were but ornaments to the accomplishments of her
mind,

mind, and served but to render the charms of virtue more conspicuous. I was not a little desirous of rendering myself agreeable to this family, for which I spared no endeavours, and had frequent interviews with the young lady, in which I paid her charms the encomiums which they really deserved; and which, from my late experience, I imagined she would naturally expect. I entertained her, therefore, with a profusion of flattery, and reiterated professions of love, without any other intention than merely to amuse or please her, and preserve myself from the imputation I had lately suffered, of stupidity and impoliteness. But, unhappily, she was young, and her retired education had rendered her inexperienced in the ways of life; sincere herself, she believed my unmeaning protestations, and what I intended only for entertainment, served to inspire her with a passion, superior even to that which I had pretended. My professions, indeed, had been delivered

only in general terms; and, had she been accustomed to modern gallantry, she would have esteemed them merely in the light I had intended. I was, however, ignorant of the ill effects of my polite perfidiousness, until, a few days since, I repeated my visit to my father's friend; who received me with augmented kindness. I embraced an opportunity, which soon offered, of entertaining the young lady alone in the garden; when, to my surprize, she reproached me with the neglect I had shewn her since my last visit, which was so inconsistent with the professions of love I had then made her; on the strength of which I had the dissatisfaction to find, that she had discarded several advantageous suitors. You, who know my unalterable attachment to Miss Watson, may easily conceive my grief and confusion, at finding the unhappiness that my indiscretion was like to introduce into a family which I had such obligations to love and respect. Whilst my mind was
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disagreeably agitated with the most troublesome reflections on this subject, the father joined us, and, to my insupportable confusion, told me that he was acquainted with my passion for his daughter; and that, to spare me the confusion of revealing it to him, he had thought proper to acquaint me, that, as he did not doubt the honour of my intentions, the friendship he entertained for our family, with my own merit, could not fail of rendering them agreeable to him.

You, my dear friend, will easier conceive, than I can describe, the emotions of my mind on this occasion. On one side, the injustice of my conduct, and the unhappy consequences which it might produce to a family which I was bound, by innumerable obligations, to esteem and respect, urged me strongly to persist in my former protestations of dissembled passion, and sacrifice my own, to the happiness of

the deceived, injured fair one: on the other, my engagements and unalterable love to Miss Watson, and the idea of all that heaven of bliss which I had so long promised myself from my intended union with her, operated with irresistible influence in favour of my candidly avowing the truth. Whilst my mind was agitated by these tormenting reflections, and suspended in the most painful uncertainty, the father and daughter were watching my countenance, and impatiently expecting a reply. What could I say? a sense of my guilt and shame would not suffer me to undeceive them, and destroy the good opinion they entertained of me, by confessing my ingratitude and perfidy. I therefore received the father's approbation of my pretended passion with a feigned joy, which while my tongue express'd my heart disown'd, and reproached me with its insincerity. The repetition of my dissembled professions soon became painful, and I reflected that, while I was
doing

doing an act of justice to one, I was highly injuring another ; I therefore found a pretence for shortening my visit, and am returned home, to deliberate on the part which I ought to chuse in this unhappy dilemma ; and the respect and veneration I entertain for your judgment, makes me desirous of your advice. Of two evils I would avoid the least ; or, rather, act the part most agreeable to justice, without any consideration to my own happiness, which I will sacrifice as an atonement for my folly. You know my engagements with Miss Watson, though you are unacquainted with her person and character ; and, therefore, it may not be amiss to inform you, that her birth and fortune are unexceptionable, and that she has all the personal charms that can contribute to perfect beauty ; and, had the native virtues of her mind been duly improved by education, she would have been an assemblage of perfections ; but a life of gaiety, and a round

of pleasures, have in some (I hope but small) degree perverted her natural dispositions. Her mother, who might justly be stiled a woman of fashion, not only indulged herself in gaming at public places, but introduced cards into her family as an amusement to her children, by which means the otherwise most amiable daughter has contracted an insuperable propensity to this fashionable vice, which I am sensible is a considerable allay to her other accomplishments; yet, such is the enchanting sweetness of her air and conversation, that I love her almost to distraction, notwithstanding this imperfection, which, great as it is, my mind fondly excuses on the score of mistaken education, and flatters me with the hopes of hereafter overcoming. Yet, ardent as my passion is, it has been blessed with an equal return from the object of those wishes, which were suspended by my studies at the university: these being now finished, I had,
until

until this unhappy accident, flattered myself with a speedy consummation of our blifs.

My endeavours relative to Louisa's engagements have been obstructed by some unexpected difficulties; which, however, I shall soon overcome, and shall be impatient until our friendship is strengthened by an union which, by securing the felicity of two persons in whose happiness I shall ever participate, will in a great measure alleviate the anxieties of my own situation. In the interim, believe me to be, with the most perfect friendship and devotion,

DEAR SIR,

Your most affectionate

and most faithful humble servant,

London,
Sept. 15, 1762.

HENRY CONWAY.

LETTER XII.

To Mr. CONWAY.

DEAR SIR,

I Interest myself too nearly in all the concerns of a family, to which the hopes of being one day united makes my principal happiness, not to partake the affliction of your embarrassed situation. You require my advice, on a subject which your judgment would naturally have determined in favour of your own happiness, had it not been misled by your own caution, in avoiding the errors which the bias of self-interest occasion. Whatever part you take, it must necessarily occasion the unhappiness of at least one innocent, deserving woman; and that consideration, to a person of your humanity and virtuous sensibility, will naturally be attended with afflict-
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ing sensations. But that justice to which you so generously offer to sacrifice your private happiness, must naturally determine you to adhere to your prior engagements, which have been seriously and deliberately entered into, which have so long subsisted, and, doubtless, been repeatedly and solemnly confirmed, in preference to those idle, unmeaning, though unjustifiable professions, which you have indirectly made, in compliance with a dangerous custom, and from a desire of pleasing: and I could wish that you had had the resolution at once to undeceive, rather than countenance a deception, which, by your subsequent confirmation of it, is rendered more highly criminal. I realize what you must have suffered in that distracting irresolution, when the shame and injustice of your conduct, with the presence of a deceived, injured parent and child, aided by gratitude and respect, engaged you to confirm and countenance their unhappy error; and I feel

feel what you will yet suffer in undeceiving them, after this confirmation; which you in justice ought to do as soon as possible. Should you sacrifice your own and Miss Watson's felicity to her's, in that your purpose would be disappointed. Constrained, or involuntary love, could impart but little happiness. But suffer me now, my friend, to tell you, that I fear your passion is misplaced, and that I think, by your own relation, the deceived lady is more worthy of your affections, than her that at present enjoys them; since it is apparent they are founded more on personal than mental accomplishments; and that those enchanting allurements you so feelingly describe, have had too much influence with you. Besides, my friend, the love of gaming in a wife may likely be productive of the most unhappy consequences; to which I think you have not sufficiently attended. A propensity to this vice is founded on low, avaricious principles, which, in a wife,

will

will prove insuperable obstacles to domestic happiness; she will neglect your society and conversation for that of a herd of profligate knaves, who, like harpies, will ever attend her as their destined prey, and engross her attention from the concerns of her family; ill fortune will sour her temper, and a life of dissipation render her unfit for the calm and delicate joys of matrimony. Perhaps, too, poverty may be the consequence; I will not say dishonour to your bed; though the chastity of a woman who is addicted to this vice, is in imminent danger, from the almost irresistible temptations to which she is frequently exposed; and may justly be suspected, if any persons may, without the strongest presumptive proof. In short, there is nothing more repugnant to the softness of female charms, than those indelicate circumstances that inseparably attend the practice of gaming.

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Perhaps I have expressed myself with too much freedom on the character and imperfections of Miss Watson; which I hope you will attribute to the warmth of my friendship, and a real concern for your happiness, which alone could have induced me to risk the danger of offending you, by delivering my sentiments with such candour, on a subject of so tender and delicate a nature. You are sensible I have no knowledge of this lady, except what I derive from your letter; in which I presume you have imitated the fraternity of lovers, by insensibly magnifying the accomplishments, and diminishing the imperfections of the object of your love. If, in this presumption, I have erred, I shall gladly retract any disadvantageous sentiments which that error has occasioned, and please myself with the hopes of your being able to overcome her unhappy attachment to a pernicious, though fashionable vice. Assure yourself,

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 91

yourself, that there is no earthly bliss which I more ardently desire, than that union which you so kindly endeavour to promote; but, as I know your unlimited generosity, I fear you may attempt to overcome the obstacles thereto, at an expence which might injure the delicacy of our friendship,, and to which it would be impossible for me to consent. I shall explain my sentiments on this head more fully in a few days; and am, with unalterable friendship and affection

DEAR SIR,

your, &c.

M——,
Sept. 18, 1762.

EDWARD WENTWORTH,

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR SIR,

IMMEDIATELY upon the receipt of your's, I set myself down to accomplish the disagreeable task of undeceiving Mr. and Miss Arnold, and exposing my own infelicity and ingratitude; but, before I had finished, I was interrupted by a visit from a gentleman; who, among the news of the day, informed me of my Lord——'s having seduced Miss Watson; a piece of intelligence at which I was almost thunder-struck. I enquired hastily of him, whether he had sufficient authority to justify his repeating a report so destructive to the reputation of a lady with whom I had the honour of being intimately acquainted, and of whose virtue a doubt had before been
never

never uttered? He replied, that he had received his intelligence, at second-hand, from his lordship; who he did not doubt would justify it. I then told him I was determined directly to require an explicit account of this matter from his lordship; and that, in the interim, I must insist on his avoiding a repetition of this report; and accordingly I instantly repaired to his lordship's house, who was not at home: from thence I directly waited on Miss Watson, who I found in a melancholy, pensive state, which was very unusual, and at which I was not a little surprized; but was more so, when, on my enquiring the cause, I received but unconnected, ambiguous answers; which ended in her informing me, that an accident had intervened, which would raise an insuperable obstacle to our union. I expressed the utmost anxiety at this information, and desired to know the nature of this obstacle, and whether nothing in my power could remove it: but
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the answers I received, instead of affording any satisfaction, raised a thousand tormenting suspicions in my mind. I, however, gave no intimations of the intelligence I had received concerning his lordship; but, on my return home, I sent him a card, desiring to meet him the next morning, which I accordingly did; when I informed him, that I had heard a report to the dishonour of Miss Watson, which I was informed derived its origin from his lordship; and, as I had particularly interested myself in that lady's concerns, I had thought it necessary to require an explanation on that subject; and then informed him of the particulars which I had heard repeated the preceding day. His lordship then told me, that he had caused me to be acquainted with those particulars, to prevent my being deluded into marriage by a woman whose chastity, he presumptuously declared, he had violated; and added a particular relation of all the arts he had used to accomplish

compleish his infamous purpose : which was afterwards confirmed by a subsequent interview and letter from that once amiable, but now ruined and lost object, but with some variation from his lordship's account. At parting from him, I told him that his baseness and perfidy deserved to be revenged, but that I should leave that act of justice to her brother, as I should from hence disown all interest in her character.

I shall now inform you of the particulars of this unhappy catastrophe, as I have collected them, both from his lordship, and the injured, ruined lady.

His lordship had long entertained a violent passion, which he honoured with the name of love, for this unfortunate object; which was no other than the eagerness of a libertine appetite, like the hunger of a wolf, insatiable but with the destruction of its object. He was already married ; and,

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consequently, his passion was dishonourable, which he therefore cautiously concealed, until he could contrive some effectual means for its gratification, on which he was resolved. He was acquainted with her unhappy propensity to gaming (the fatal effects of which you seem to have foreseen by your last) and accordingly laid those snares which but too well succeeded. He found means to engage her in play; at which, by a variety of seductive fortune, she was induced to continue, until his lordship had won a very considerable sum from her; and the desire of recovering it occasioned her again to risk the precarious luck by which she had already so severely suffered; which again proved equally unfortunate. The desire of retrieving the effects of her ill success augmented with her losses; and, as she had the command of her whole fortune, she madly persisted in this fatal vice until his lordship had gained the greatest part of it: when despair suggested,

gested, that the remainder could not be better employed than in endeavouring to recover what she had already lost. A dawn of success for a while relieved her anxiety, and inspired her with momentary, delusive hopes; fortune, however, soon reverted into its former channel, and continued, with some little interruptions, until she had lost her all. Whether, in this affair, his lordship did not descend to the practice of arts which, even with gamesters, are esteemed unjust, I will not determine. The anxieties of her mind at this event, which were almost insupportable, his lordship artfully augmented, until he had wrought her to a pitch of despair suitable to the perpetration of his detestable purpose. He pressed her with wine, which she drank, though not in sufficient quantity to destroy, but impair reason, and raise desire. He then represented, in lively colours, the complicated miseries of poverty and servile dependence, aggravated with the loss of character, and

also of her lover; who, he insinuated, would naturally abandon a woman that had lost her all at gaming; thus reproaching her with the fault, and its attendant miseries, of which himself had been the author. Having so prepared her mind for his design, he revealed his passion with all the warmth and rhetoric he could command; and concluded with offering to restore her whole fortune, with a considerable augmentation, if she would but once yield to the gratification of his desires; promising the most inviolable secrecy, and confirming his promise with the most solemn oaths, which are usual auxiliaries to the accomplishment of such detestable designs, though afterwards disregarded. She at first rejected this proposal with the contempt and abhorrence it deserved; but his lordship, no ways discouraged by the repulse, again repeated his protestations of unalterable love; declaring, that his marriage only had prevented his addressing her in an honourable way;

way ; reiterating his representations of the miserable consequences which must result from her refusal, which he artfully aggravated until they produced a distraction in her mind : she wept ; and, at length, unhappily deliberated : whether the wine she had drank, or the imperfections of her education, contributed thereto, I will leave to your judgment ; but his lordship improved the fatal minute to her ruin. When this was accomplished, and reason again resumed its empire in her mind, she reflected, with inexpressible horror, on the crime to which she had yielded. She had that confidence in his lordship's solemn promise, that she weakly imagined this criminal transaction would remain a secret : but could not, however, endure the thought of imposing herself in marriage on the man who loved her with such disinterested purity, and therefore resolved to retire to a convent, and there, by a sincere repentance, expiate her crime. His lordship,

ever, soon after visited her, in hopes of obtaining a repetition of his vicious pleasures ; but was repulsed with the contempt his baseness deserved. He had, agreeable to his promise, restored her fortune, and imagined that she proposed consummating our once intended marriage, and therefore thought me an obstacle to the repetition of his desires ; to disappoint what he thought her purpose, he basely caused me to be made acquainted with this affair, in the manner I have already related ; but believe he did not intend to descend to these minute particulars, until, by the manner in which he was interrogated, he thought them necessary, to prevent my demanding that satisfaction which I believe he had no inclination to grant. Miss Watson's unhappiness was soon after augmented by a knowledge of his lordship's infidelity and perjury ; and, in her own vindication, she thought proper to acquaint me, by letter, with many of these particulars. She is now
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preparing to set out for Flanders, to seek in a convent an asylum from the malicious censures of a malevolent world, and the severe reproaches of her own sex; which, perhaps, many of them have escaped not by being more virtuous, but more fortunate; or if, indeed, they have preserved their chastity inviolate, it has perhaps been owing to a happy concurrence of favourable circumstances, or the languid temperament of constitution, rather than their own inflexible virtue: or, perhaps, they do but exchange the joys of incontinence for those of scandal. I assure you, my dear friend, that I sincerely pity her unhappy destiny. Had she been educated uncorrupted by vicious example, she would have deserved, and doubtless attained, a more enviable state of felicity. But the delicacy of my love has received an incurable wound, and my mind is, at present, in a state of disorder which it is difficult to describe; when this can be overcome, I shall prepare my-

self to render the hitherto deceived and injured Miss Arnold that justice which is due to her merit, and to which I am now indispensably engaged, as the former obstacle is removed. I shall reserve several particulars relative to my sister's concerns, until I have the pleasure of communicating them to you verbally at —; where I expect soon to see you, and confirm the truth with which I have the honour to be,

DEAR SIR,

Your most faithful,

and affectionate friend,

London,

Sept. 28, 1762.

HENRY CONWAY.

L E T T E R XIV.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR SIR,

PURSUANT to the resolution I imparted when I had the pleasure of seeing you at —, I soon after waited on Miss Arnold, and was well received; the emotions of my insincerity at my last visit having been attributed to another cause. I soon found sufficient reason to admire those perfections in this amiable lady which my former attachment to Miss Watson had rendered imperceptible, and contemplated, with the utmost satisfaction, the charms of her native innocence and sincerity, which had exposed her to the deception of my unmeaning gallantry; and soon had the pleasure of being able to reiterate my former protestations with truth and sin-

cerity, and pleased myself with the hopes of doing an act of justice without impairing my own happiness; but, soon after, the news of Miss Watson's misfortune unfortunately reached Mr. and Miss Arnold, together with my attachment to her at a time when I had made these unmeaning professions of love to the former. This naturally required an explanation, and laid me under the necessity of acknowledging the insincerity of my former conduct, which I did; urging, however, as many favourable excuses as I could, without infringing the limits of truth. The father presumed, that a regard to justice still constrained me to continue my addresses, against my inclination; and, as he disapproved of an union upon these principles, he advised me to lay aside the character of lover for that of a visitor; and Miss Arnold declared, that she was determined to suffer the unhappiness to which her easy credulity might subject her, rather than avoid

avoid it by receiving that hand from motives of justice, gratitude, or pity, which love had denied. I seriously assured her, that, since our acquaintance had become more intimate, her perfections, to which my former attachment had prevented my doing justice, had deservedly inspired me with the reality of more love than I had ever professed; and that I desired, from motives of self-happiness, to be permitted to continue my addresses. But these assurances did not receive the credit which they deserved; and she desired me to spare myself the trouble of continuing to act the part of insincerity; declaring, that she was resolved to endeavour to overcome her misplaced passion; and I found myself obliged to yield to a temporary suspension to my addresses, to which I have now an irresistible *desire, which is ever augmented by difficulties, if they are not insuperable; as they rouse our attention, and, by exciting our active powers, occasion emotions which nourish the*

prevailing affection. I have, however, parted with the family on friendly terms, and am not without hopes of being permitted to prosecute my suit, when they are convinced that it is my sincere desire. Nothing new has intervened relative to the affairs in which you are particularly interested: and I can therefore only repeat my former assurances of being, with unalterable friendship and devotion,

DEAR SIR,

Your, &c.

London,
Oct. 20, 1767.

HENRY CONWAY.

LETTER

L E T T E R XVI.

To Miss CONWAY.

DEAR LOUISA,

YOUR favour I have just received, but can hardly believe the account you give me of Miss Watson's misconduct, so inconsistent with her natural good sense and apparent virtue. How powerful are the allurements of vice! and how feeble and impotent is reason! Of all the vices that disgrace female virtue, there is, perhaps, none, incontinence and intemperance excepted, which is more incompatible with the natural delicacy of our sex, or productive of more misfortunes, than that fashionable one of gaming; and yet there is, unhappily, none more universally frequent, among those of both sexes whose rank and station in life ought to excite them to be-

come patterns of virtue and morality to their inferiors. Were cards used with moderation, merely as an amusement, though it might be justly deemed a misapplication of time, it would yet be excusable; but gamesters are actuated by very different motives: to acquire the property of others is the end of their desire, to attain which many of them practice low, cowardly arts, which render them infinitely more criminal than the highwayman, whom want reduces to the necessity of open dishonesty. And those who do not descend to fraud for the gratification of their avarice, yet sacrifice thereto health, property, tranquility, friendship and happiness. Gaming is inseparably connected with anger, envy, deceit, and dissipation; and the moment it commences, a period is put to conversation, society, and benevolence, which are discarded for the important work of effecting each other's ruin; and, in proportion as the laudable work advances, survey their

features ; on one side you will discover the most ungenerous exultation, and on the other the most ridiculous anger ; both equally contemptible, and inconsistent with that decency and decorum from which female delicacy ought never to deviate : experience likewise has taught the world to suspect the chastity of female gamesters ; which consideration alone ought to deter every one therefrom that has any regard to her character.—But I will forbear moralizing, to inform you that we shall not set out for London in less than a fortnight, so that you will probably arrive there some days before ; indeed, I feel a reluctance at the thoughts of returning to those impertinent addresses from which I have, for some time, enjoyed an agreeable exemption.

Accept of my sincere congratulations on the happy prospect of future felicity which your situation affords, and from which I
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receive a sensible pleasure; and do me the justice to believe that I am, with the most perfect friendship and devotion,

DEAR LOUISA,

Your ever faithful

and affectionate

F——,
Oct. 25, 1762.

SOPHIA STANHOPE,

LETTER

L E T T E R XVI.

To Miss STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

ON Wednesday last we arrived in town; and I have since had the mortification to find, that my hopes of being soon disengaged from Benson are ill grounded, and that the endeavours of my brother for that purpose will prove fruitless. This brother, whose whole life has been a continued series of acts of fraternal affection, had been some time in treaty with the mercenary wretch on this affair, which had been delayed by various obstacles; but, at length, Benson had offered to relinquish the contract, on condition of my brother's paying him a sum of money equal to one-half of the fortune to which my father's will entitled me; to this he agreed: but

Mr.

Mr. Wentworth's delicacy opposed the execution of this agreement, and would by no means consent to receive obligations that would so much impair my brother's fortune; and he, on the other hand, would not suffer mine to receive any diminution. While this was in agitation, however, Benson concluded, from my brother's concessions, that a marriage with Mr. Wentworth was resolved on at all events, and he therefore resolved to gratify his avarice with the whole, instead of half the fortune he expected; and therefore, before we had come to any resolution on this subject, my brother received information from him, that he was determined to decline any agreement for relinquishing the contract: so that all my expectations on that particular are at an end; and we must now abandon all hopes of that union with which we have been lately *tantalized*, and console ourselves for this disappointment with the disinterested joys of a Platonic love.

I was last evening at Drury-Lane theatre, for the first time since my arrival in town, together with Mr. Wentworth and my brother. After our return, the topic of theatrical entertainments was introduced; and Mr. Wentworth justly commended the delicacy of the present taste, which had banished from the stage every species of indecency, however artfully or agreeably conveyed: we are no longer, said he, entertained with *Congreve's Old Batchelor*, and other pieces of a similar nature, which were once so well received, though evidently tending to encourage vice, and corrupt the morals and chastity of an audience; but in their stead are substituted pieces capable of affording not only amusement, but useful instruction. The present passion, however, said he, for amusements of the theatre, is carried to a dangerous excess, and, I fear, may be productive of those unhappy consequences which have heretofore proved the most considerable

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concurrent causes of the decadence, and final destruction, of the most respectable republics of antiquity, by becoming matters of business and importance, instead of mere diversions; and engrossing that time and attention which ought to be devoted to the more important concerns of life, at the expence of public virtue, and profusion of wealth, prostituted to the maintenance of those whose lives are notoriously irregular and immoral; while real objects of compassion are disregarded. How many are there, continued he, who pay dearly for beholding imaginary scenes of distress, while they suffer numbers of wretches, oppressed and emaciated by the complicated horrors of poverty and disease, to pass, without regarding their solicitations, or extending the divine hand of charity to alleviate their miseries. This is a species of inhumanity to which, perhaps, tragedy is instrumental, by accustoming the imagination to contemplate visionary scenes of
greater

greater horror; and thereby impairing our compassion for the real misfortunes of others. Nor are the consequences resulting from the exhibition of successful villainy on the stage, less detrimental. Success, with the greatest part of mankind, affords a sanction even to criminal enterprizes; and the frequent representation of successful vice, by familiarizing it to the mind, destroys our natural horror and detestation of it, and furnishes a precedent for the commission of similar crimes: and for this reason, said he, I have long thought, that the representations of the theatre ought to be confined to those particulars where vice, odiously delineated, is discouraged, by receiving the most condign punishment; and virtue, painted in the most amiable colours, is encouraged, by a just reward. This would limit our theatrical representations to comedy or tragi-comedy only, which are certainly more agreeable to our natural humanity and love of justice, than those spectacles

tacles of distressed virtue, so afflicting to a compassionate mind, that, during the representation, it is frequently under the necessity of consoling itself with the consideration of its being but a fiction. Nothing, however, can be more absurd, than to consider the stage a school of morals, as some of its advocates have done: those circumstances which are indispensibly necessary to render it amusing and agreeable, either familiarise or dispose us to vice: tragedy would languish without great distresses or enormous crimes; and comedy, to please, must flatter the passions, soften the heart, and inflame the imagination. The salt which the poet mingles to please, necessarily produces this effect; and it will be found, on reflection, that all those plays which have generally been most successful, were the most immoral. Nor can we reasonably expect virtue from an entertainment that would be ruined by it. To this let me add, that the immorality of
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dramatic performers, which, in every age, has been a subject of complaint, is of pernicious tendency. To see a pretty actress carested by the male sex, and notoriously supported in the highest affluence by her incontinence, is a pernicious example to the female part of an audience. I will acknowledge, however, that in great, opulent, and luxurious cities, where vice and corruption already prevail, the stage may be tolerated, as a vehicle of entertainment less detrimental than many others which might otherwise be pursued. But when our excessive attachment to the theatre diverts our attention and charity from the needy and wretched; when it renders us regardless to the concerns of our country, and extinguishes public virtue in our minds; when we are more attentive to the pretensions of rival actors, or the fate of a play, than to the public welfare, it ought to be discouraged, as having heretofore proved the chief concurrent cause of the entire perdition

dition of the most celebrated republic of antiquity.—Whether you will entirely approve of Mr. Wentworth's sentiments on this subject I know not, but they are always engaged on the side of virtue and justice; and I am so well convinced of his native merit and acquired accomplishments, that, were there no obstacles, I should willingly consent to an indissoluble union, without wishing to continue an unnecessary scrutiny, or prolong the term of his probation; as I sensibly feel the force of love in its utmost purity and ardour, and, perhaps, augmented by the difficulties with which it is opposed. The passion, Sophia, which I once entertained for Benson, and which my inexperience honoured with that epithet, I now perceive was but a bare esteem, founded on an ill-grounded persuasion of his supposed merit.

The unhappy Miss Watson, I am informed, is retired to a convent in Flanders,

to escape the censures of a malicious world : and my brother is not a little chagrined at not being permitted to renew his addresses to Miss Arnold, with whom he is become passionately in love, since she discovered the insincerity of his former professions.—But the clock strikes twelve, and admonishing nature demands her wonted rest ; I shall, therefore, defer my narration until your arrival, which I daily expect, with all the impatience which can result from the esteem and devotion with which I shall ever continue,

DEAR SOPHIA,

Your most faithful

and affectionate friend,

London,

Nov. 5, 1762.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER XVII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOUR favour of the 10th of September came to hand but last week; it has, however, afforded me the highest satisfaction, by the information you there give me of my indulgent mother having forgiven the indiscretion of my late enterprize; as also, by the news conveyed therein of your academical and ecclesiastical preferment; of which the sanctity of your life and manners has undoubtedly rendered you worthy. I congratulate you, my dear brother, on your acquaintance with miss Conway, whom I once esteemed the most amiable of women, except only the lost Sophia. Your accomplishments will naturally inspire her with a passion equal to your own; and

and your prudence will preserve you from any indiscretion whereby you might forfeit it, as I have unhappily done that of Miss Stanhope. I find, however, that you would even then have the obstacle of a prior engagement to overcome; but some means might certainly be found to obviate this difficulty; if not, relinquish her fortune to the mercenary wretch: your spotless virtue, and unblemished reputation, will naturally procure you such an establishment in the church as will afford all the conveniences of life; more than which, I am convinced, you do not require. Besides these, you have just and almost certain expectations from our uncle Wentworth. Oh that there were no greater obstacles to that union to which I once aspired with Miss Stanhope! how quick would I revisit my native land! Let me persuade you to endeavour to discover, through Miss Conway, whether she has forgot every thing of me but my faults, and whether there are

yet no remains of that esteem of which I was once the happy object. Inform me, likewise, of the success of my rival, for one I have the mortification to find I have. It is a just observation of a noble French author, *that absence impairs weak, but augments strong passions*; that it has produced the latter effect on me you will easily conceive, by my impatient curiosity on the subject of Miss Stanhope.

Since my last, Miss G——s has married a practitioner of physic in this island, and a gentleman of some fortune; an event which has occasioned a change in my situation, as, by the conclusion of this alliance, I naturally became an obstacle to the expectations of this step-son, who proposed coming into partnership with Mr. G——s, of which the latter was, without doubt, equally desirous; but a sense of my past services forbid the dissolution of our union against my consent: perhaps, too, Mr.

G——s

G——s feared, that a measure of this unjust nature would induce me to engage myself in practice in opposition to them, and thereby deprive them of a great part of the business, as he well knew that my diligence and faithful attendance had procured me the general esteem of our employers; but, whatever were his motives, he offered me the sum of five hundred pounds to relinquish our partnership in favour of his son-in-law; which I accepted: and, as it had subsisted for near a year, I found myself, on settling accounts, in possession of near one thousand pounds: a sum which I am determined to risk for the acquisition of a greater; and have, therefore, become proprietor of one-third of a privateer, a Bermudian brigantine, mounting 14 carriage guns, with swivels, &c. and and manned with 100 men. These vessels being built of Cedar, and on a particular construction, are, perhaps, the swiftest sailers in the world, and, therefore, the best

adapted to the expedition for which this is designed; and on which I propose also to go in quality of surgeon. This, my dear brother, is an hazardous enterprize, in which nothing could have induced me to engage, but my irresistible desire of hastening my return to England, and to the society of my dear mamma, yourself, and my other friends. I expect to sail on a cruize in a few days, and hope, in my next, to give you a good account of our voyage, and to repeat my reiterated assurances of ever being, with unalterable esteem,

Dear Brother,

Your most faithful

and affectionate

Barbados.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

L E T T E R XVIII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

THREE days after dispatching my last to you, we sailed from Barbadoes on a cruize, directing our course for our intended station at the northward of the French islands, where we expected to intercept vessels bound from them to Europe. We had been at sea for near three weeks before we met with any other than small New England vessels; several of which, mistaking us for enemies, put themselves in the way of being taken; and were, doubtless, insured much beyond their value. This ill success by no means answered the sanguine expectations I had conceived, and I began to regret my having quitted my practice in Barbadoes :

however, on the morning of the 25th ult. we fortunately discovered a large ship at a considerable distance, standing to the northward, to which we immediately gave chase with all possible sail; and, as she was deeply laden, we by noon came within gun-shot of her, and fired a gun from our bow-chace, which she returned under French colours, to our great joy. We expected, however, some resistance, as we discovered that she exceeded us in number of guns and weight of metal; but her inferiority in number of men, of which we could not discover above twenty-five, made us determine on boarding them as soon as possible; which we executed, though not without difficulty, on account of the height of her sides, which were defended by netting; and in cutting it away near 15 of our men were killed: this difficulty, however, being overcome, we soon entered their vessel, and, by superiority of numbers, drove the enemy from the upper decks, when
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they surrendered, and our prize happily proved a large French ship, bound from St. Domingo to Brest, and richly laden with indigo, cacao, coffee, cotton, and sugar, to so great a value, that, to prevent our prize being retaken, we resolved to convoy her ourselves into Antigua, which was the nearest port; and, in our way, had the additional good fortune of meeting a Dutch ship, having on board French sugars, though greatly inferior in value to our former capture: this ship we likewise took the liberty of convoying into port, where she was condemned, without difficulty, as was the former; which sold for nineteen thousand pounds, and the other for about six thousand five hundred, currency of Antigua. My share of these prizes, as third owner and surgeon, amounted to upwards of five thousand pounds currency of this island. The transacting of this business detained us near three weeks; when our crew found themselves possessed of too

much money to think of another cruize, while any part of it remained unspent; which, however, was but a few days. Yesterday, as we were preparing to sail, a ship arrived from England, with the news of the signature of the preliminaries for a peace; which has determined us to sail for Barbadoes to-morrow: and I hope, on my arrival there, to have the pleasure of informing you of an additional capture.

You did not, in your last, mention any thing of Miss Jackson; perhaps, because you know nothing of her. I must beg, however, that you will take the trouble of enquiring into her situation, and, if she has need of any pecuniary assistance, that you will pay her, on my account, one or two hundred pounds; for which you may draw on Messrs. —, my agents at Barbadoes. I must also beg you to assure my mamma of the unalterable continuance of

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 129

of my obedience and duty; and believe
me to be, with the most perfect affection
and devotion,

My dear brother,

your, &c.

Antigua,
Jan. 1763.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

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LETTER XIX.

TO MR. CHARLES WENTWORTH.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

BY yours which I have just received, I learn the change in your situation, and your enterprizing scheme for acquiring a fortune at the expence of our enemies ; which is, indeed, justifiable by the law of nations, though perhaps not perfectly agreeable to that general humanity and benevolence, which mankind mutually owe each other. Your new enterprize, however, will be of short duration, as the definitive treaty is now signed, which I hope has put a final period to the carnage and desolation of war. Hands were not given us to destroy each other; nor is there, in the nature of things, any obstacle to the perpetual duration of that universal peace and harmony for which

our common Creator designed us; and, whenever this peace and harmony suffers an interruption, *one at least* of the contending nations must be greatly wicked. If to abridge the life of an individual be a crime of the most atrocious nature, how immense must be the sin of destroying thousands, desolating provinces, and multiplying widows and orphans? Can the scepter convert justice to injustice, or the crown convey a peculiar privilege for the commission of these enormities? But I will turn my reflections from public to private concerns.

The obstacles to my union with Miss Conway are not so inconsiderable as you seem to imagine. A moderate portion of wealth, sufficient to procure the conveniences of life, is indispensibly necessary to the fruition of matrimonial felicity: not but that I could be content, nay happy, with Miss Conway, on the bare necessities

requisite to supply the wants of nature, though procured with the most laborious, incessant toil. But how could I think of reducing, from affluence to penury, the dear Louisa, whose unhappiness I much more than participate: that consideration alone annihilates every wish of being united to her, until that union can be a means of augmenting, rather than diminishing, her felicity. The *fellowship* of ——— college, which at present affords me a decent subsistence, I should cease to enjoy on entering into the marriage state. As to what you tell me of ecclesiastical preferment, it is a subject with which you are but little acquainted. Did I really deserve all those flattering encomiums which your partiality has bestowed on me, I should be far from expecting the consequences which you mention, in an age in which *even things sacred are prostituted to venality*. I am far from mentioning this on my own account, as I am sensible that I

have

have received from my superiors unmerited favours. But, conscious as I am of my own inferiority, can I justly expect preferment, when so many clergymen, distinguished for their piety and learning, are almost destitute of bread, and diverted from the concerns of religion by the cares of procuring daily sustenance; whilst others, through interest rather than merit, engross plurality of livings, and are thereby elevated above the discharge of *sacerdotal duties*, which are esteemed as drudgeries; and, as such, abandoned to the *backneyed* part of the profession; for such poverty has created, to the ridicule and disgrace of our holy religion!

I have lately been tantalized with the hopes of effecting an accommodation with Benson, relative to his pretensions on Miss Conway; but these have proved fallacious, and I am now agitated by a disagreeable suspense between hope and fear, though
the

the latter considerably preponderates; but not from any apprehensions of my being indifferent to the amiable Louisa; these are now happily at an end; her female reserve melting before my tender protestations, she has blushing owned me lord of her heart, given up every secret of her soul to my friendship, and resigned her future conduct and concerns to my advice and protection: but, instead of deriving any superiority from this pleasing discovery, it will, if possible, render me more tender and respectful; and from hence it will become my study, not only to please, but bless her. To effect this it will be necessary to defer the completion of our mutual wishes, until those obstacles which at present obstruct our union, can be so far overcome, as a prudential concern for her happiness requires: when this shall be effected, the lover and the friend will encrease in the husband, and, I hope, secure, to the end of life, the height of terrestrial happiness,

piness, which can only thus be attained. To enable me to accomplish this desired event, my mamma has generously offered me a part of her fortune; but as the income of the whole is no more than sufficient to afford her a genteel maintenance, I can by no means precipitate my happiness by impairing hers: besides, my dear brother, it would be unjust in me to diminish the principal to which, notwithstanding the different periods of our birth, justice has given you an equal right; nor shall fraternal affection deny what justice has granted.

I have, neither in this or my former letter, given you any account of Miss Conway's person or accomplishments: you have seen her: and, therefore, it is unnecessary: besides, beauty is no quality in objects themselves, but exists only in the mind that contemplates it; and each mind may perceive a beauty, which, to another, would

would appear a deformity. There are certain qualities, however, which all mankind conspire to approve ; and these, not only my own vanity, but justice to Miss Conway's merit, oblige me to declare, that no one can possess, in a more eminent degree, a mind happily disposed, and liberally endowed by the hand of nature, cultivated by every advantage of instruction and example, and a soul humanized by every tender, amiable passion, embellished with every refined accomplishment, and adorned with every virtue : these are charms more permanent than the fugitive allurements of beauty ; and it is to these charms that I am a captive.

You desire me, in your last, to endeavour to discover, through the assistance of Miss Conway, whether Miss Stanhope has forgot every thing of you but your faults. In answer to an improper request, which your impatient anxiety has dictated, I must
do

do Miss Conway the justice to inform you, that she has perfectly acquired the art of keeping inviolably the secrets of friendship; an art which is indispensably necessary to the maintenance of that tender mental connection. Besides, my dear brother, it would be unjust in me to exert any influence I may have with her, for the purpose you desire. I have frequently seen Miss Stanhope at my visits to Miss Conway, but have carefully avoided any subject relative to you; being sensible of my inability to justify your conduct relative to Miss Jackson; and that any attempts, therefore, as they would appear interested, would naturally be fruitless. As I am sensible of her uncommon merit, I wish to see you restored to that place in her esteem which I am convinced you once enjoyed; but believe this will be unattainable, except by your justification, as the same motives that engaged her to her late resolutions will preserve her in an adherence thereto. As to your rival,

I believe

I believe he has made no great progress in his suit, though assisted by the influence of Mrs. Stanhope. — I am commanded by our mamma to assure you of the continuance of her love and affection; which can only be equalled by that of,

Dear Charles,

Your most affectionate

and most devoted brother,

London,
March 8, 1763.

EDWARD WENTWORTH.

LETTER

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 139

L E T T E R XX.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

AFTER a passage of nine days we arrived here, from Antigua, from whence I wrote to you, but without meeting with any addition to our former good fortune. As the time limited by the articles of peace for a cessation of hostilities is approaching, the other owners have declined engaging in another cruize; for which reason we have sold the privateer, which has proved so fortunate to us: and, after receiving my dividend, I find myself in possession of near four thousand pounds sterling; which I must now endeavour to augment by the arts of peace; among all which I have given the preference to agriculture, for various important reasons. The planting of sugar is here deemed the
most

most profitable branch of agriculture; but the stock necessary in these islands for that purpose, together with the high price of lands, will require a much larger capital than mine; for which reason I am determined to remove to some new settlement, where lands may be obtained with little or no expence, and should naturally prefer some of the islands ceded to his majesty by the present treaty of peace; but it is expected they will not be settled in less than a year or two, and then on terms not very advantageous to adventurers; for which reason I have resolved to repair to the river *Demery*, which, with that of Esquebo, makes a new colony on the coast of Guiana, in South America, under the dominion of the States-General of the United Provinces, though a considerable part of it is inhabited by British settlers, and several gentlemen on this island are proprietors of plantations in that colony, especially Gedney Clarke, Esq. his Majesty's surveyor-general, who

has

has five or six sugar estates there. From these gentlemen I have received a most advantageous account of that settlement, and have purchased sixty slaves, at thirty pounds sterling each (a price much inferior to what I am informed they bear in that colony); and have also chartered a vessel for transporting them, together with myself, my overseers, tradesmen, and many other necessaries for my projected plantation; and expect, in about four days, to sail from hence for that river.

I yesterday paid a visit to Mr. G——s; whose affairs, I find, have not bettered since his acquisition of a son-in-law, or the dissolution of our partnership; on the contrary, there has lately been a small defection in his practice, and a greater is soon feared. He proposed my making a third partner with them; which you will naturally believe I declined.

You

You may continue to direct your letters as you have hitherto, until I can inform you of a readier method: and in the interim believe me to be, with the heighth of fraternal affection,

My dear brother,

your, &c.

Barbadoes.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTE

LETTER XXI.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

AGREEABLE to the resolution I communicated to you in my last, I failed from Barbadoes for this river; and, the morning of the fifth day after our departure, we discovered ourselves in muddy water, which extends all along this coast, at the distance of twelve or fourteen leagues from the shore. About noon I discovered the land of the continent of America, for the first time of my life, which was not more than five leagues distant, as it is extremely low towards the sea coast; not long after we discovered the mouth of a large river, and an island distinctly appeared therein, by which we knew it to be the river Berbice; the mouth of which lies
in

in about 6 deg. 15 min. north latitude, and is situated about 15 leagues S. E. by E. from Demerary, for which we immediately bore away, having the tide in our favour, which ebbs and flows with great velocity on this coast; and, about sun-set, discovered the Lagoon Islands, that lie without the mouth of the river Essequibo, which is about two leagues westward from Demerary, and, with it, constitute a colony under the government of his excellency Laurence Storm Van Gravesende. The next morning we discovered the river Demerary; for which we directed our course, keeping to the westward until we had that of the river in view for a considerable distance, to avoid a sandy shoal which extends from the eastern shore; and then entered the river, about mid-channel, with a depth of sixteen feet water, and discovered a *Dutch flag* elevated above the tops of some plantain trees, with which it is surrounded; behind it stood a low thatched house, and before
were

were planted several *patteraroes*, with some shabby soldiers. This fortification, which is the only one that defends the entrance of this river, gave us no advantageous idea of the colony. However, we perceived, at a little distance, on each side the river, several plantations in good order, and well cultivated. Before this fort we came to anchor, and were informed that we could pass no farther, without obtaining leave from the *Commandant*, the governor being then at Essequibo. The usual method of travelling here is by water, and that with the current of the tide, which runs with irresistible rapidity. As soon as this became favourable, I set out to wait on the Heer Laurence Lodowick Van Barkeyke, the commandant; and, in a few hours, arrived at the place of his residence. He spoke French, and some indifferent English, and received me with a great share of good-nature, and more politeness than is

usual to his countrymen. After informing him of my business, he readily sent the necessary passport for our vessel, and insisted on my becoming his guest for that night; to which I consented: and he soon informed me of a plantation, extremely well situated, on a very fertile spot, which had been somewhat cultivated; but, not being furnished with the requisite number of slaves, was forfeited to the donors, who are the Dutch West India company, the proprietors of all the Dutch colonies in America; and which he assured me I might obtain by petitioning the court of Policy, which was to sit in a few days. This I have done with success, and landed my slaves, overseers, tradesmen, &c. who are now employed in building the requisite houses, and making other improvements. My present residence is on the *Friendship*, with Mr. M'Lean, who is administrator for the affairs of Mr. Clark, the proprietor
of

of this and several other plantations in this colony; and here I propose continuing until my own house is rendered convenient.

As this country is but very little known in Europe, I shall, in my next, give you some account of it.

I dispatch this by way of *Middleburgh*, in the province of *Zealand*, to which place the inhabitants of this colony are obliged to remit their produce; and our future correspondence will be most commodiously continued by way of this place. Your letters may be directed to the care of Messrs. —, with whom I am settling a correspondence for such articles as are necessary for my present undertaking.

Reiterate my former assurances of filial duty and obedience to my dear parent;

H 2

and

and let your own sentiments ever do justice to the perfect esteem and devotion with which I have the happiness to be,

Dear brother,

Your most faithful,

and most affectionate,

Rio Demerary,
21 Feb. 1763.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER

A Few days since I wrote you by the way of Holland, and then promised that my next to you should contain some account of this country; but an event, pregnant with impending danger, at present engages the general attention of all the inhabitants of this colony, whose solicitude is now requisite for the preservation of life, the most peferable of all properties. In short, my dear brother, we are thrown into the utmost consternation, by a general revolt of the slaves in the adjacent colony of Berbice, of which we have lately received a melancholy account, by the arrival of Mr. Andrews, a planter in that colony; who, with the greatest part of his

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negroes,

negroes, had the good fortune to escape here. His account of the unhappy event, though confused and inaccurate, is justly alarming; and, by the report of several Indians who are instantly arrived, we are informed, that the greatest part of the white inhabitants are massacred.

To give you an idea of our dangerous situation, I need only inform you, that the distance between the upper settlements of Berbice, and those of this river, is but about thirty miles; that our own slaves are at least ten times more numerous than our white inhabitants; that, when they are joined by their brethren from Berbice, the immense disparity of numbers will render it impossible to withstand such unequal force: and our fears of this junction are unhappily far from being groundless or chimerical; even our own negroes are daily expecting, and secretly desiring it, and several of them have testified an inclination

nation to commence a revolt, without waiting for the assistance of their brethren from Berbice; these, however, have been taken into custody. But the general consternation, which it is impossible to conceal, and which is rendered very evident by many of the planters now abandoning their plantations in the upper part of the river (which is most contiguous to Berbice) will, I fear, alone be sufficient to encourage our negroes to imitate the example which those of Berbice have now given them: and I have so little inclination to hazard the consequences of a revolt of a herd of barbarous slaves, that I would gladly escape from hence with life only, and relinquish all my once pleasing expectations from my new settlement; but an order of government is issued, justly requiring our continuance here, for our mutual preservation, and that of the colony. An embargo is likewise laid on all the shipping, who are taken into the public service, and stationed

in different parts of the river. A small sloop only, belonging to Mr. Clarke at Barbadoes, is now permitted to sail for that island, with an account of our situation, in hopes that those gentlemen, who are so much interested in our preservation, will afford us some assistance, and by her I dispatch this letter; which, perhaps, may be the only one it will be in my power to send you, during the continuance of our present danger. The departure of the sloop is at hand, and I can only assure you of my being, with unalterable affection,

Dear brother,

Your, &c.

Rio Demerary,
March 2, 1763.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

L E T T E R XXIII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

IT is with pleasure that I can actually inform you, that our expectations of assistance from Barbadoes were not ill founded, and that our fears are now greatly dispelled by the happy arrival of a ship of war, mounting eighteen carriage guns, under the command of —— Towers, Esq. a lieutenant in the British navy. This ship is the property of Mr. Clark, and was put into commission for the present emergency, by Sir James Douglass; who has sent to our assistance a company of British marines; and from Mr. Clark we have also received a company of soldiers, raised in Barbadoes at his own expence, and that within the space of twenty-four hours: so con-

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siderable

considerable a reinforcement has changed the current affairs; and the hopes of our slaves, who aspired to nothing less than a recovery of liberty, have suffered a visible depression, and we have now no apprehensions of an insurrection from them, unless they should be encouraged thereto by the arrival of their brethren from Berbice, who are in number about four thousand, and actually in full possession of the whole of that colony. The settlements on the river Berbice extend upwards of two hundred miles from its mouth: and it was near the middle of these settlements that the insurrection began first, by the slaves of four plantations only, who first massacred their masters. The white inhabitants situate above these plantations, on the first alarm, confusedly fled higher up the river; and these collected themselves in a large brick mansion-house, situated on one of the plantations belonging to the Dutch West India company, with what arms and provisions they

they could procure. Here they were soon surrounded by the negroes, but defended themselves for some time, in hopes of assistance; but, finding the rebellion was become general, they listened to terms of an accommodation, which the negroes offered; and, at length, a treaty was concluded, and solemnly sworn to by the principal negroes; in consequence of which the Dutch surrendered the house, their arms, &c. the negroes having solemnly promised them leave to retire unmolested to Fort Nassau: but, instead of this promise being complied with, the whites were all murdered, except only two persons, who happily escaped to the woods. The remaining inhabitants, when the revolt began, retired to Fort Nassau, which is situated about ninety miles distant from the sea. Here governor Van Hogenham, apprehending himself in danger of being deprived of all communication with Holland, by the advice of his council, precipitately blew up the fort, and

embarked himself, with its weak garrison, and such of the inhabitants as had escaped the fury of the rebels, on board four merchant ships then lying in the river, and with them retired to its mouth; where they are waiting for assistance from abroad. The slaves now enjoy an undisturbed possession of the whole colony; and we are frequently alarmed by the timid Indians with false reports of their being on their march to pay us an unwelcome visit. But we hope they will have the goodness to delay it for six or eight weeks; by which time an expected armament from Holland will probably enable us to give them a due reception.

I fancy you will be somewhat surprized, when I tell you, that I have lately made a purchase in Berbice, and that at a time when our affairs appeared with a much more unfavourable aspect than they have at present: in short, I have had the temerity

rity to expend one thousand pounds, which I had reserved for augmenting the number of my slaves in this colony, in purchasing a plantation, which, perhaps, the rebels have destroyed, as they have done many; and in acquiring negroes who are now in arms, and may, perhaps, be killed in battle, or executed for their revolt. This, I am sensible, is a very hazardous acquisition, but I think the chances are in my favour; since, should it be recovered without very considerable damages, it will at least be worth eighty thousand gilders. The gentleman who has made this sale (somewhat under value as I think) had formed very melancholy apprehensions concerning the termination of the present insurrection, and was resolved to make the most he could from his effects in that colony, and abandon it for ever.

My plantation on this river is vigorously and successfully cultivated; having suffered
 but

but little interruption by the present disturbance, as it is situated near the sea, where no immediate danger is apprehended. The planters have now, in general, resumed their former severity in the treatment of their slaves, as being the surest method of preserving their subjection. I am anxious for the happy termination of an affair in which I am so highly interested; and which I hope, ere long, will enable me personally to testify to my dear mamma, and yourself, with what, &c.

Rio Demerary,
April 5, 1763.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 159

L E T T E R XXIV.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOUR favour of the 8th of March I have just received, and feel a very sensible pleasure, from knowing that your passion for the amiable Miss Conway is blessed with an equal return; but am really sorry that a concern for my interest should become an obstacle to your happiness, or have induced you to refuse my mother's generous offer of assistance; and I now voluntarily renounce all share in every thing except her affection, as it has long been my determination to avoid England, until I can return to it with a portion of affluence that will require no subsequent addition.

I am

I am sorry that you have construed my request, relative to Miss Stanhope, so much to my disadvantage. Had I entertained a culpable curiosity to discover that lady's secret sentiments relative to me, I should not have expected to gratify it through your means, as I have long been convinced of the delicacy of your sentiments, on that and every other particular; but, being suspended in a state of painful uncertainty, I sometimes flattered myself, that Miss Stanhope's sentiments might have suffered some change, which she might be willing to avow, and of which you might obtain a knowledge by Miss Conway. What you have observed relative to a justification, can afford me but little satisfaction: conscious as I am of my own innocence, the nature of things will admit of no proofs in my vindication, except my own assertion and Miss Jackson's confession; the former has proved ineffectual, though solemnly confirmed; the latter, there is no prospect
of

of my being ever able to obtain. But though I can now justly and feeling exclaim, in the language of Virgil, "Me tamen urit amor," I hope, however, that despair, which finally annihilates every passion, will hereafter free me from the pangs of hopeless love, which absence has hitherto augmented: and, as the indulgence of fallacious hopes will only tend to protract the period of my cure, I shall, henceforward, endeavour to obliterate from my mind the idea of the lost Sophia; whose name you will no more see in my future letters.

Since my last, our situation in this colony appears with a more favourable aspect, and our fears daily diminish. The governor of Berbice has lately received a body of troops from the garrison at *Surinam*, together with several armed vessels from the island of *St. Eustatia*; with which he sailed up the river, and landed on a plantation belonging to the Dutch company,
called

called the *Dawger Head*, around which he has cast up intrenchments, and there proposes waiting for the armament from Holland, which we have certain advice is now preparing, and which may very soon be expected; when the rebels will undoubtedly be reduced to their former obedience. Their whole conduct, since their first infatuating success, has been a series of folly and madness: *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.* They first began by murdering several of the Indians, who, in consequence thereof, are become their inveterate enemies, and several hundreds of the *Carribbee* and *Accawaw* nations have taken up arms against them, being encouraged by a reward which our governor has offered, of a certain sum for each of the negroes hands, of which we have lately received several parcels. Indeed, these Indians prove not a little troublesome to the rebels, frequently surrounding their houses in the night, and setting them on fire, by shooting

shooting arrows, with fire at their points,
 into the thatch with which they are covered,
 and killing the negroes as they leave them,
 confused with fear and the darkness of the
 night. Happily for us, likewise, the re-
 bels are at variance with each other; an
 event which alone has prevented them from
 paying us an unwelcome visit. These ne-
 groes chiefly consist of two nations, viz.
 the Ebo's and Congo's. The former na-
 tion first began the insurrection; and a bold
 aspiring negro of their number, named
 Cuffee, who was a principal promoter of
 the revolt, was invested with the chief
 command. But afterwards the Congo's
 became discontented, and resolved to elevate
 one of their own countrymen to that sta-
 tion. This attempt governor Cuffee and
 his countrymen opposed; and a civil war,
 with a bloody battle, was the consequence.
 In this the Congo's, who were more nu-
 merous, were victorious: but Cuffee brave-
 ly resolved not to survive the loss of his
 dignity;

dignity ; and, in consequence of that resolution, soon after shot himself. This fellow, at the commencement of the insurrection, had taken a young lady of character and fortune, the daughter of Mr. George, a Dutch planter in Berbice ; her he preserved from the general massacre, and afterwards compelled to become the slave of his libidinous pleasures ; and, since his death, it is reported, that the unhappy lady is reduced to the necessity of performing the same involuntary office to his successor.

There are among these negroes several Dutch soldiers, whom ambition or avarice has tempted to desert from the river of *Curantime*, where they had been posted by the governor of *Surinam*, and go over to the negroes, by whom they are employed in training them to military discipline. But we have lately received from Holland an addition to the garrison of this colony, and
are

are pretty well recovered from the consternation which our first alarm occasioned; and imagine that their mutual dissensions will employ them a few weeks longer, when I hope to be able to give you an account of their entire destruction.

I must again desire you to assure my dear mamma, that neither the length of my absence, nor the distance of our situations, will ever impair that dutiful affection which I shall ever study to demonstrate, to the utmost of my power; and continue to believe me to be, as I truly am,

Dear Brother,

Your, &c.

Rio Demerary,
May 3, 1763.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER XXV.

To Miss STANHOPE.

AN accident has happened, my dear Sophia, with which I shall particularly acquaint you to-morrow; and which you will acknowledge a sufficient excuse for my not visiting you this afternoon, agreeable to my promise. — I am now to inform you, that Mr. Wentworth arrived in town last evening, with the bishop of —, and this morning paid me a visit. Our conversation was interesting, but too long to repeat here. One part only of his address I shall relate; after observing, that his artless behaviour is in every degree consonant to the candour of his sentiments. “As not only my own, but your happiness, (said he) are objects of my ambition in that union to which I have aspired, and even been permitted to indulge the hope
of

of one day attaining, I shall regulate my conduct, both before and after that desirable event, on principles the most likely to secure our mutual felicity. The acquaintance (continued he) which ought to precede matrimony, should be of that artless, open, and intimate kind, which alone can give the sexes a proper knowledge of each other; and of this nature shall my conduct towards you invariably continue to be, in opposition to the prevailing customs of the world, which impose a constant restraint on the freedom of behaviour and conversation, till, by degrees, we habitually act a part repugnant to our natural dispositions; and that with such ease and familiarity, that the artifice is undiscoverable to the most penetrating eye, by a common acquaintance; though it cannot be concealed through the intimate connection and private scenes of connubial intercourse. And we frequently find, that, after the intimacy which is a natural conse-

of marriage, removes all the restraints, and discovers to the parties their reciprocal mistake: disgust insensibly arises from disappointment, and often increases to an aversion destructive to connubial felicity. The obstacles which have arisen to the attainment of our desires, dear Louisa, will furnish us with sufficient opportunities of providing against any disappointment of this nature, if our behaviour is governed by prudence."—As I am determined mine shall be on this particular at least. But I shall defer any farther comment on the present subject till to-morrow morning; when I promise myself the pleasure of visiting you, and relating the accident by which I shall be detained this afternoon; and in the interim am,

Your affectionate

Tuesday Noon.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MISS STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

BY a card that I have just received from Mr. Wentworth, I find he is leaving town this morning, with the bishop of —. He passed the last evening with us, and I was alone with him for a considerable time; in which our conversation turned on that subject which to us was particularly interesting. “ You have, doubtless, observed, dear Louisa (said he, after some previous discourse) that of late I have not pressed, with my former ardor, for the consummation of that happiness I promise myself from an union with the most amiable of her sex: this I hope you do not attribute to any diminution of a passion, that neither time or accident can impair; and it is

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I

now

now for you to determine, whether it be not most eligible to defer this event to a more favourable season, rather than encounter the difficulties that will otherwise be inevitable? Your happy disposition might, perhaps, render you contented with a competency, which even the most rigid œconomy would hardly render such; and love might, in some degree, palliate the inconveniences of a scanty income. But how can I think of reducing you, whom I love infinitely more than myself, and whose happiness is to me more interesting than my own, from the blessings of affluence, to the cares of penury and dependence! Believe me, dear Louisa! though I could enjoy life with its bare necessities, earned by incessant toil, whilst you was happy and independent; yet I should be the most miserable of beings, when you became reduced to the necessity of participating in my wants. It is these considerations, dear Louisa (continued he) that have made me less importunate

fortunate on a subject that forms the ultimate object of my wishes; and I submit it to your determination, whether they are of sufficient importance to make a delay necessary, till something decisive can be done with Mr. Benson, or my own situation receives a favourable change?—Do not (added he) dear Louisa, suspect me of lucrative views; I do not deserve a suspicion of this nature; as my heart is a stranger to every sentiment that is injurious to your felicity.”

“ I flatter myself (replied I to this address) that I could contract my desires, not only within the bounds of reason, but the limits of necessity; and, without pain or anxiety, relinquish the gratifications of affluence and gaiety, which to me were never alluring; I am sensible, however, to the necessity of that delay which you mention at present, and acknowledge the purity of your passion; because it is replete with ho-

nour, and because you are willing to sacrifice every thing to the happiness of its object."—He expressed his thanks for this favourable construction of his behaviour; and added, " Though I am rendered uneasy by this necessary delay, it will not prove insupportable; true love, as well as virtue, is rewarded by the sacrifices that are made to it: and we, in some degree, enjoy the privations we impose on ourselves, by reflecting on the pangs they occasion, and the motives of our conduct.—In spite of our mutual disappointment, and those obstacles that have hitherto opposed our wishes, the affectionate exertion of two hearts attracted by each other, is always attended with pleasures unknown to those at ease; and even our disappointed wishes are preferable to a state of indifference: it is thus that love teaches its votaries to extract pleasure from their pains. — Even those obstacles that oppose our happiness are not without their use. Mr. Hume observes,

serves, that obstacles, when they do not appear insuperable, increase our passions, (by rousing the senses, and stimulating our active powers to inordinate emotions, that augment the prevailing affection) and engage us to desire what is forbid, or with difficulty obtained: and the truth of this observation I have lately experienced in myself; as my late disappointments have violently augmented that passion which I before thought incapable of addition: but, notwithstanding the excess of its ardour, I have carefully confined it within those restraints which the severity of your virtue has imposed; as I know, by my own sensations, that the least indulgence ought not to be granted the senses, as long as virtue forbids their full gratification; and shall endeavour to content myself with anticipating our future joys in idea, and sharing the sweets of friendship, with the pleasure of loving and being beloved, till some favourable change will permit a more

perfect consummation of our happiness." You, Sophia, will doubtless think this a very extraordinary harangue, unless I tell you, that the answers which I occasionally interposed, and by which the several parts of it were either introduced or connected, have been omitted, as not being necessary to elucidate *that particular* which was yesterday the subject of our conversation, and for which I have selected a part of what passed between us last evening. The remainder you shall hear this afternoon, if you will indulge me with your company at tea.

I am, dear Sophia,

Your ever faithful

and affectionate

Tuesday Morning.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER XXVII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE now the pleasure of informing you, that the long expected armament is not only arrived from Holland, but has effected the entire recovery of the colony of Berbice. It consists of several frigates, with a considerable body of land forces; with which the governor took possession of the ruins of fort Nassau without opposition; as the negroes, upon his approach, retired up the river. To precipitate their speedy reduction, a party of troops were sent by water to this river, where they were joined by the company in the pay of Mr. Clark, under the command of Capt. *Smith*; to whom the Dutch officers generously yielded the command, as a compli-

ment to the British nation, which had so readily sent them assistance. After this junction, Capt. Smith transported the troops near two hundred miles up the river by water; where, crossing by land to Berbice, they suddenly encountered, and entirely defeated, the principal body of the negroes. Several frigates, at the same time, advancing up the river, the negroes fled from all the plantations, and dispersed themselves in the woods; which *bunger*, and the *arrows* of the *Indians*, rendered but a poor *asylum*; and the greatest part of them are since returned, and surrendered to the mercy of the Dutch.

I have likewise the pleasure of hearing, that the rebels have had the goodness to spare my plantation in that colony from the conflagration to which they consigned many others: whether I shall be equally successful in recovering the slaves belonging to it, I am uncertain.

The

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 177

The part which the subjects of Great-Britain have had in stopping the progress of the present insurrection, and in the subsequent reduction of the rebels, has acquired the English settlers in this colony the esteem and affection of the Dutch inhabitants, who had lately observed our increasing wealth and numbers with envious and malicious eyes; to which the frequent captures of their ships during the late war had not a little contributed: but now their good-humour is excessive, and they do not scruple to attribute the preservation of this colony to the timely assistance which we received from *Barbadoes*. And the governor and council of this colony have voted Capt. Smith their thanks, and a considerable pecuniary compensation, for his services.

My plantation on this river has attained a degree of improvement beyond my most sanguine expectations; owing to the industry of my manager, whose knowledge and

fidelity has amply compensated my own inexperience; and, if I am not mistaken, the present situation of my affairs justly authorizes me to indulge the pleasing hope of soon revisiting my native country; that indulgent parent, and that dear brother, to whom I shall ever study to demonstrate the love and affection with which I shall inviolably continue, &c.

Rio Demerary,
Feb. 1764.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOURS, of the 20th May ult. I have just received; but am not fully convinced of the impropriety of my endeavouring to augment my fortune by a settlement in this colony. Had I left England with the approbation of my friends, I should have thought my prize-money a sufficient acquisition; but the manner of my departure has exposed me to the censures of that malicious herd, *who absurdly imagine, that whatever they detract from the reputation of another, is added to their own*; and I well know, that nothing can so effectually silence the tongues of these wretches, as wealth, acquired by the means which they have censured.

My sentiments, relative to the lady whose name I am endeavouring to forget, you will find fully explained in a letter which I hope by this you have received.

The wretched situation to which you tell me that Miss Jackson is reduced, affords me the greatest uneasiness; nor can I reflect on that misery, of which I have been the inconsiderate author, without feeling the most poignant remorse; and, whatever pecuniary compensation it may be in my power to make, I shall gladly afford her. *But, alas! how insufficient is wealth to repair the loss of virtue and honour, rendered more terrible by the accumulated load of vice, disease and infamy: it will, however, relieve her from the wretched necessity of continuing any longer a venal slave to the pleasures of every libertine; and must beg, as you regard my peace of mind, that you will endeavour to discover her ignominious retreat, and afford her the assistance I mentioned*

tioned in my letter from Antigua; for which the means still remain in the hands of my former agents in Barbadoes.

Since my last, I have made a voyage to Berbice: where I found my property very considerable, and in a condition even more prosperous than I expected. The works of the plantation remain entire and undamaged, and, among the slaves belonging to it, only four died during the rebellion, and but three have been since executed; as they were not engaged in the revolt until it became general.

The Dutch, you know, have ever been esteemed severe in their executions, to a degree of barbarity: this several hundreds of these unhappy slaves have experienced at Berbice, for their late attempt to recover their liberty; an attempt which, in an European, we should have commended as a glorious instance of magnanimity and heroism; but
for

for this magnanimity and heroism, which is deemed criminal in an African slave, these people have suffered the most cruel punishments that revengeful ingenuity could invent: great numbers of them have been broke on the wheel, with many additional circumstances of torment; whose heads are now affixed, *in terrorem*, on a lofty scaffold erected for that purpose. Others have been burnt by slow degrees, to prolong their torment, as if death alone was an insufficient punishment. But most of these wretches have suffered with a degree of constancy and fortitude truly heroic. Of this I saw an example, in a negro woman condemned to die by a slow fire, for having been a principal fomentor of the insurrection. This woman, without once betraying either fear or grief, suffered the torment of being *roasted*, by slow degrees, until her skin rose in blisters, and her eyes started from their orbits; and, during the whole of that tragical process, sustained
 extremity

extremity of anguish with seeming insensibility, glorying in the part she acted during the revolt, and declaring that she thought death, after the few months liberty she had enjoyed, more eligible than ages of life in a state of slavery ; and incessantly exhorting her surrounding countrymen to improve the first favourable occasion of renewing their attempts to recover their natural freedom.

Such spectacles of horror were far from affording me satisfaction. There is nothing, but self-preservation, that can authorize the putting to death one of the human species; and that will by no means justify such unnecessary, additional circumstances of cruelty. I have long thought the greatest part of our *judicial executions illegal*. It is universally acknowledged, that individuals have no right over their own lives; and it follows, as a necessary consequence, that they can confer none to society.

ciety. *Nil dat quod non habet*, is a self-evident proposition; and, without a delegation of this right from individuals, society can have none, except what they derive from the laws of nature and self-preservation. I know it has been asserted by Rousseau *, that every man has a right to hazard his life for its preservation; and that, to prevent his falling by the hands of an assassin, he may consent to die, on becoming such himself. This, indeed, is a specious, but sophistical argument, in justification of capital punishments. Of what avail is a man's assent to the disposal of that in which he has no right? Or was it ever imagined that an individual, consenting to die, could authorize another to put him to death? The end of society, and the basis of all its laws, are the preservation of life and property. To the preservation of life we have a prior,

* Treatise on the Social Compact.

unabrogable right, by the laws of nature; which those of society, in this particular, do but confirm: and all the right of society over the lives of its members, is evidently derived from that natural law which authorizes the death of an individual, when, and only when, his life is incompatible with the safety of others: it is, therefore, I think, evident, that the punishment of death can be justified only when it is necessary to self preservation; and, consequently, that no crime can justly be punished with death, except murder; and I think it may be avoided, consistent with the safety of society, even where murder has been committed, when the murderer is in our power; who, by dungeons, chains, &c. may be effectually secured from future violence. You will, perhaps, object to this, that death is but a just punishment for murder, abstracted from the consideration of self-preservation. This may, perhaps, be true; but we are not constituted the executors

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tors of divine justice : the final punishment of every crime is reserved for that God to whose view all secrets are open : the sword of justice should be exercised to prevent, not revenge them ; and to inflict pain and torment, as a retaliation for crimes, is an *infringement of the divine prerogative*. “ Vengeance is mine (saith the Lord) and I will repay it.”

If the preservation of life can alone justify capital punishments, it is evident, that no offence against property can deserve death ; and that those laws which inflict it as a punishment for stealth, &c. have no foundation in natural justice. The infinite inequality between the life of an individual, and a few shillings, or a greater sum, is obvious ; and I am far from thinking that these exemplary punishments answer the end which is expected from them, viz. the preservation of property, by deterring others from similar offences. Pu-

nishments

CHARLES WENTWORTH. 187

nishments can only be made terrible by being made rare : frequency of executions lessens their horror ; and the mind is soon familiarized to those spectacles which are designed to intimidate ; every repetition of them becoming less affecting, until they are beheld without emotion or sensibility : this is evident, from the practice of thieves and pickpockets, who frequent public executions, and, in the view of expiring malefactors, perpetrate crimes which, by the laws, are punished with a similar fate.

How far the executions at Berbice are justifiable by the principles of self-preservation, I will not determine : it is certain, that the slaves of that colony had been treated with more lenity and indulgence, than those of any other colony in the West Indies ; and experiencing, in some degree, the sweets of liberty, they were incited to aspire to a state of freedom which could only be attained by the death of their masters.

ters. This proves what I asserted in a former letter, that it was necessary, both for the content and happiness of the negroes, as well as the safety of their masters, to banish from their minds even the idea of liberty; since it is well known, that the impossibility of attainment finally destroys the desire; and this can only be effected by severity of discipline: and it is evidently necessary for those who reside with slaves more numerous than themselves, and whose preservation depends on the subjection of those slaves, to use the means of severity requisite for maintaining this subjection; as the master and slaves are in a state of opposition somewhat like Hobbes's state of nature; and the death of the former is the necessary consequence of the latter's recovering their liberty. But it remains to be determined, whether they have justly been subjected to this state of slavery; if they have not, all the severity which is necessary to preserve them in it, is but a repetition of that injustice

justice by which they were first reduced to subjection; and every measure by which we oppose the recovery of their freedom, is tyranny and oppression. The determination of this particular depends on the legality of the slave-trade; in support of which there are but two arguments which deserve notice: the first is, the pretence of instructing them in the Christian religion; which, indeed, is but a pretence, being as little thought of as practised; and I doubt whether, in all the West India Islands, there are twenty negroes who ever heard the principles of Christianity: the only care of their purchasers being to improve their labour to the most advantage.

The second argument in justification of this trade is, that they are thereby preserved from that death which, it is said, was formerly inflicted on prisoners of war. But this will be of but little force, when it is considered, that the greatest part of these wretches

wretches who are sold to America, are either stolen or kidnapped, or else are the wives or dependants of their needy avaricious chiefs, who are induced to sell them by the alluring offers of foreign purchasers: and even those who are prisoners of war, become such by wars begun and carried on solely for the purpose of making slaves: so that this iniquitous traffick is, to them, a source of rapine and violence. But the injustice of this commerce will have little influence in putting a stop to it, while it is thought to procure such considerable advantages: these, however, are rather imaginary than real; few of the productions of the West-Indies are of real utility, serving almost wholly for the gratification of luxurious, vitiated appetites. But, whatever may be the sentiments of others on this particular, I have resolved to make my stay as short as possible, *in a country where oppression and injustice are necessary for self-preservation.*

I

During

During my stay in Berbice, I had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with Miss George, who I mentioned in a former letter, and who is celebrated for her sufferings. This lady, blessed with a very agreeable person, had received an education the most advantageous the colony could afford; and, the week on which the insurrection commenced, was to have been united in marriage to a Dutch gentleman of fortune, for whom she entertained a passion, and who had long paid her his addresses. That unhappy week, however, deprived her both of her parents and intended husband; whose plantations were of the four on which the insurrection first began, and who were then murdered; while she and her sisters became prisoners to the negro governor Cuffee. This negro was of the Ebo nation, and had been of some consideration in his own country; but, in war with a neighbouring nation, he was made prisoner, and sold to the master of a
Dutch

Dutch ship, by whom he was brought to Berbice, and was there purchased by the intended husband of Miss George. He there found many of his countrymen, some of whom had formerly known him, and paid him some respect on the score of his former condition. He was of a bold, ambitious temper; and, observing their great superiority in numbers to the whites, he formed the design of attempting the recovery of their freedom. While he had this scheme in agitation, [he had frequent opportunities of seeing Miss George, when, with others of the slaves, he rowed his master's yacht, which is the usual vehicle of travelling in that colony. This lady's rank, personal charms, together with the difference of their colours, inspired him with desires, which he perceived it would be impossible to gratify, except by violence; but these obstacles rather augmented than abated their vigour: and he now exerted himself, with the greatest industry, to engage his
country-

countrymen in the intended revolt, which he diligently precipitated : but, finding the intended marriage would happen before the slaves in every part were ripe for the insurrection, he engaged the negroes of four plantations to begin the assault sooner than had been intended ; but took care to preserve Miss George and her two sisters from the massacre which every other white person suffered on these plantations. His former consideration in his own country, together with his activity in this affair, induced the Ebo's to make him their chief ; with which the other slaves, at that time, complied.

Cuffee, now finding the object of his desires in his power, determined on their gratification : but, judging that more than one white woman among them might tend to promote civil discord, his cruel policy induced him to have the sisters of Miss George put to death. This act of barba-

rity being effected, he next attempted the execution of his purpose on the unhappy lady; whose situation, perhaps, was more perfectly wretched than that of any other human being: herself a prisoner to a herd of barbarians, from whom nothing but the most brutal treatment could be expected; her father, mother, lover, and sisters cruelly murdered, and herself a destined victim to the brutal desires of their murderer; and he, to aggravate her horror, a negro; with whom, in this country, a commerce of this nature is deemed unnatural and bestial.

Sunt lacrymæ rerum, et mentem

Mortalia tangunt——

VIRG.

If any state of misery could authorize suicide, her's most certainly might: but, though she earnestly wished for death, *religion* forbade her using the means to abridge the term of her existence: nor, indeed, were they in her power.

The

The villain, in endeavouring to effect his purpose, found, that neither sollicitations could engage, nor threats awe her to a compliance, and therefore recurred to force; which, however, she effectually resisted, until, impatient of delay, he called such auxiliary assistance as no female strength could oppose, and which procured him the full enjoyment of *libidinous villainy*. To avoid a repetition of similar violence, the unhappy woman was afterwards necessitated to submit to his will. He soon became haughty and imperious, not only to her, but to his countrymen also. She lived, however, the wretched involuntary slave of his pleasures for some time, until the rebels, being in full and quiet possession of the whole colony, had leisure for civil dissension. The negroes of Congo being the most numerous, and also displeased at Cusfee's insolent arrogance, resolved to depose him, and raise a countryman of their own to the chief command: this resolution pro-

duced a battle, in which the Congo's were victorious. Cuffee determined to live no longer than he could live as governor. *Aut Caesar, aut nullus*; and therefore resolved on his own death, together with that of Miss George, to prevent her falling into the hands of his rival; but she was not to be found, having happily fled from his house on the first news of his defeat, from an apprehension of violence; and, therefore, he executed his purpose on himself only.

Miss George, as an appendage to the government, now became subservient to the pleasures of the new governor, who treated her with somewhat more kindness than his predecessor: with him she continued until the arrival of the armament from Holland; when the negroes retired to the woods, and she was carried with them; but hunger, and the annoyance of the Indians, soon dispersed them; and the chief, to avoid a more cruel death, became

became his own executioner; and she was then left at liberty to return to the Dutch, emaciated with fatigue and hunger, an object truly wretched. The recovery of her father's plantation and slaves, to which she is sole heiress, has, however, restored her to affluence, if that can compensate her sufferings.

I shall gratify your curiosity relative to this part of America in my next, when I propose to commence the accomplishment of my former promise.—The term of my residence here is somewhat uncertain. Could I dispose of my property without loss, it would be very short; but of this I have no immediate prospect; as the late insurrection has lessened the general avidity for purchasing in *Guiana*: however, as this property is situated in a foreign territory, I shall wait some time in hopes of disposing of it; as I would not chuse, at my return to England, *to have any interest separate from that of my native country.*

Affure both yourself and my dear mother, that neither filial, nor fraternal affection, has suffered the least diminution in the mind of,

My dear brother,

Your, &c.

Rio Demerary,
June 1, 1764.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXVIII.

To Miss STANHOPE.

AT length, dear Sophia, I am perfectly disengaged from Benson, through the successful interposition of the best of brothers; whose prudence and affection have repaired the indiscretion of his sister. You will naturally believe, that I am too much agitated by the pleasure I feel at this event, to descend to a minute narration of the circumstances by which it was effected. At present, therefore, you must be satisfied with knowing, that his late marriage with Miss Arnold, by encreasing his own happiness, made him more sollicitous for mine; the felicity of possessing a woman in every respect so amiable, was impaired by reflecting on the disappointment of his sister and friend; and, as every attempt for an accommodation with Benson had been ren-

dered fruitless by his illiberal conduct, he secretly resolved on another expedient. Accordingly, a few days since, he wrote to Mr. Benson, informing him, that he had some business of an important, but private nature, to transact with him, and desired an interview with him at a tavern in — street for that purpose, appointing yesterday morning for the time of meeting.—They met accordingly, and Mr. Conway immediately introduced the business of their interview (which you will naturally guess to have been my engagement) and expatiated on the baseness of his behaviour towards me, and the illiberal, ungenerous artifices, by which I had been deluded to an engagement I could not fulfil, but at the expence of happiness, and which was now an obstacle to my union with a more deserving man. He declared, that an aversion for Gothic appeals to the sword had induced him to such favourable offers for an accommodation, as the laws of *fashionable* honour would

would not justify ; but they had been refused, and he had found, by the prevarication of his behaviour, that he could expect nothing from his *probity* or *justice*, and would, therefore, recur to his *honour* : that his sister's injuries required reparation, and he repented that he had not sooner procured it, by the only expedient that can prevail with those who are insensible to the motives that influence honest men ; and, therefore, in her behalf, he required the satisfaction which an injured person had a right to demand ; insisting, that he should either relinquish my engagement, or meet him this morning to terminate the difference. But neither of these conditions were agreeable ; the former he positively refused complying with, and, for the latter, his want of courage left him no inclination. He particularly objected against fighting, "as repugnant to religion and virtue," but Mr. Conway told him, that neither his conduct in that particular for which he re-

quired satisfaction, nor in any other instance of his life, appeared to have been regulated by those considerations; and that scruples of conscience were justly ridiculous, when connected only with those sins which are attended with danger; and that fighting should be the only alternative to his resigning the contract he had obtained from me: and that, if he refused the latter, and would not comply with the former, he must expect to be affronted as often as he could meet him in public. After some hesitation, Mr. Benson consented to what he found unavoidable, and agreed with my brother to meet him in Hyde Park this morning, at six o'clock, with one friend to each. At five this morning my brother softly rose, leaving Mrs. Conway asleep; and, dressing himself, escaped out of the house without the knowledge of any one. After waiting some time at the place of meeting, Benson appeared; but not to fight. He declared, that "after having

con-

considered the matter with more attention than he had done before, he was not fully satisfied of the justice of his pretensions; and, though he believed he had as much courage as any man, he did not chuse to fight in an unjust cause, and would therefore repair with my brother to a coffee-house, and relinquish my engagement." Whether this proposal was dictated by cowardice, or a sudden regard to justice, is not for me to determine; but, as it was satisfactory, so it was accepted: and he not only resigned the contract, but also signed a writing, in which he disclaimed all those pretensions which for some time past have been an obstacle to the happiness of your friend — About half an hour after seven o'clock my brother returned: Mrs. Conway had discovered his absence but a few minutes before (having sat up late the preceding evening) and had just alarmed the family, when his presence suppressed those

unfavourable apprehensions we had began to form. I had hurried on my cloaths at hearing of his absence, and had just entered Mrs. Conway's chamber when he returned, and presented me with the instrument of my freedom, with expressions of affection that rendered his services still more obliging. What inquietude have I escaped by my ignorance of his design! Though I had no favourable opinion of Benson's courage, I should have trembled for the event, nor ever have suffered the best of brothers to endanger his life to repair the misconduct of his sister.—You, my dear Sophia, who have so kindly shared in the uneasiness I have before suffered, on account of my past indiscretion, participate now in the joy I feel at having escaped its evil consequences, and recovered my former freedom.—Mr. Conway is now writing to inform Mr. Wentworth of this event.—Indulge me, if possible, with the
plea-

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pleasure of seeing you this afternoon (as I shall be necessarily detained at home) and believe me, under every change,

Dear Sophia,

Your most affectionate

Tuesday Noon.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

To Miss STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

INCLOSED herewith I send for your perusal the copy of a letter my brother has just received from Mr. Wentworth, in answer to that by which he informed him of my disengagement from Benson.—I shall not at present detain you with any reflections on its contents; but suspend my own judgment until I am favoured with yours. I am,

Dear Sophia,

your affectionate friend,

Thursday afternoon.

LOUISA CONWAY.

To

TO HENRY CONWAY, Esq.

Inclosed with the preceding.

IT is with equal pleasure and gratitude, my dear friend, that I reflect on the interest you have long taken in my happiness; but especially on your last successful, and affectionate endeavour, to remove the obstacle that deprived me of the felicity of an alliance with the most deserving of families, and the most amiable of women. My thanks are likewise due for the very obliging expressions with which you have accompanied this information.—But be not surprized, my friend, when I tell you, that I feel myself embarrassed by this intelligence, pleasing as it is in itself:—I will be explicit—You have doubtless observed, that, some time since, when your endeavours for an accommodation with Mr. Benson became unsuccessful; and

when I had reason to believe, that your amiable sister's partiality in my favour might, with a little persuasion, have been sufficient to induce her to honour me with her hand, at the expence of her fortune; I neither solicited the blessing, nor was I inactive: but, on the contrary, I indirectly opposed it, by suggesting the inconveniences it would produce to Miss Conway, in depriving her of the pleasures of affluence; in which the dependance of my own situation would not enable me to support her. In doing this, I was actuated only by a concern for her happiness: but others cannot know the secret motives of my conduct; of these they will judge from appearances, which I fear would be unfavourable to me, if, when your interposition has happily restored the amiable Louisa to her freedom and fortune, I should now become solicitous for a blessing to which I before appeared indifferent.—I would not entertain unnecessary scruples, nor suffer a *false delicacy*

delicacy to oppose your friendly partiality, or detain me from a blessing that constitutes the ultimate object of my wishes.—But yet there is a regard due to myself, as well as to others.—The esteem—permit me to say, the *love* of Miss Conway, is essential to my happiness; I cannot, therefore, do any thing that may give her the least occasion to suspect me of mean or mercenary principles. No; I would rather live in a constant separation from her, than even possess her, at the expence of her esteem.—An accession of fortune equal to her own would remove my present embarrassment; but, without it, I know not how to act. Reflect, my friend, on the delicacy of my situation, and favour me with your candid opinion at my arrival in town; for which I shall set out to-morrow morning, being necessarily detained here to-day.—Make my respectful compliments to Mrs. and Miss Conway; and assure the latter, that the ardour and purity of that passion

with

with which she has inspired me, has not suffered the least diminution : and permit me also to add, that I shall esteem that moment as the happiest of my life, in which (without deviating from the rules of propriety and honour) I am permitted to espouse your amiable sister, and add a nearer relation to that of

Your most faithful,

and affectionate friend,

 ,
Jan. 30, 1765.

EDWARD WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

To Miss STANHOPE.

DEAR SOPHIA,

A Few hours after dispatching you the copy of Mr. Wentworth's letter, my brother received a second from him; in which he informed us, that a messenger had just arrived, requiring his immediate attendance on his uncle at W——; where he is now very dangerously ill.—This accident has necessarily prevented his coming to town, agreeable to the promise made in his former letter; but he assures us of a visit, as soon as duty, or the state of his uncle's health, will permit his absence. He likewise expresses great uneasiness at this accident; not only on account of his uncle, but because it deprives him of the pleasure of throwing himself at the feet of your friend.

friend.—As I am always impatient to acquaint you with every occurrence in which I am concerned, I have employed a minute to give you this intelligence; to which I can only add, that I am,

Dear Sophia,

your, &c.

Friday Morning.

LOUISA CONWAY.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXXI.

To the Rev. Mr. WENTWORTH.

DEAR BROTHER,

SINCE my last, I have made a tour into the interior parts of Guiana, to contemplate the works of nature in their wild, their natural arrangement, undisturbed by the false improvements of art; and, by a personal examination, to discover the manners and customs of a people not yet departed from the innocence, the ignorance, and simplicity of a state of nature; and compare them with those of civilized nations, who have advanced in the paths of science and corruption, till no vestige of nature appears among them, and till they are strangers to the state from which they have wandered: an undertaking which, I am persuaded, you will approve, as its object

ject is of the highest importance in the exercise of reason, and such as can only be attained by actually visiting countries, inhabited by people who, in the pride of civilization, are considered as ignorant and barbarous.—The only mode of travelling in this country, for any considerable distance, being (as I have already informed you) by water, I set out on my tour in a yatcht, as it is here stiled, or a large barge, rowed by eight oars; having, near the stern, a convenient tent, painted and decorated. I had in company with me Mr. S——, a surgeon, who has resided here for many years, and by his acquaintance with the nearest tribes of Indians, gained a knowledge of their languages: I had, besides, as an interpreter, an Indian born in the interior part of the country, who had been made a captive by the Accawaw tribe, and sold to the European inhabitants in this colony; and had thus become acquainted with several Indian and European languages. Imple-
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ments for hunting and fishing, with cassava bread, salt, and rum, were all the provision we made for our sustenance during the voyage, if I may so term it. The two last of these articles were particularly necessary; the Indians having no spirituous liquors, except those which are made by fermenting the bread of cassava and plantains with water, and which, though not so palatable, approach nearest to ale: as for salt, they seldom taste it; but, to supply the want of this article, they season their food with such an incredible quantity of red pepper, as would instantly excoriate the mouth of an European not accustomed to its use, as all those who reside in tropical countries are, in some degree.

I shall give you a particular account of my tour *; as you will thereby be able to
collect

* The account given of Guiana in this letter, may be relied on as true: and the editor flatters himself, that,

collect some knowledge, not only of the wild, but cultivated parts of this country. We departed from my own plantation, situated near the mouth of this river, assisted by the flowing tide, which runs with great rapidity.—On each side of the river appeared a single tier, or row of plantations, cultivated with all that neatness, order, and regularity which is conspicuous in

that, at a time when all are deserting the country for the capital; when agriculture is declining, and the enormous, but increasing magnitude of this metropolis, threatens the most alarming consequences (to those who consider it in a proper light) every attempt to represent the felicity of a country life will be considered as laudable.—Large cities are destructive of population and agriculture; and all those who collect mankind into those unnatural assemblages are enemies to the species.—Within a century, how much has London increased, and how much has agriculture declined?—Those who reflect, that, a few years ago, the corn exported from this kingdom annually amounted to near a million of money; and that, lately, we did not raise a sufficiency for our own consumption, can answer this question.

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all the Dutch colonies on this coast. Their principal produce is either canes, cotton, coffee, or cocoa; the trees of the last three articles being planted in strait rows, at equal distances, afford a most beautiful prospect; which is rendered more enchanting by the contrast which the eye discovers in the surrounding forests, whose trees are ranged, by the hand of nature, in a wild but pleasing disorder. The plantations, within forty miles of the sea, are all surrounded by dykes, to exclude the circumjacent water, which inundates the whole coast of Guiana; and are likewise intersected with trenches and canals, which not only drain the lands from their natural humidity, but serve to evacuate the rain waters which fall on them, through sluices contrived for that purpose. The houses of the planters are large, commodious, and surrounded with piazzas.

About one o'clock in the afternoon the current of the tide returned towards the ocean, and we then stopped at the nearest plantation; where the owner, who was a native of Holland, received us at our landing, and, giving us his hand (a piece of ceremony indispensable in this colony) invited us to the mansion-house, where we dined on venison, and various kinds of poultry, both wild and tame; our host being provided with Indian hunters, as most of the planters are in this colony.—In the evening the current of the tide again became favourable, and, after taking leave of our host, we pursued our course, till the reflux of the waters again obliged us to stop, and repose ourselves at the nearest plantation. In doing this, we did nothing but what the custom of the country fully authorized, every plantation being a place of entertainment for travellers; where all are hospitably received who have not, by some notorious misconduct, merited the dis-

displeasure of the inhabitants : nor is there one instance of victuals or drink having been ever sold at any table in this colony, strangers being frequently entertained for months, without being allowed to make any pecuniary return. On our landing the second time, we found the proprietor of the plantation, and his manager, retired to sleep, it being past midnight. A servant, however, shewed us a commodious apartment, where our own slaves hung up our hammocks, the universal substitutes to beds in this colony, on account of their greater coolness, as well as safety ; the latter being exposed to the approach of poisonous insects, reptiles, and even snakes. Here we reposed ourselves till morning, and then rose with the sun, as is usual in this country, that is, at six o'clock ; the sun always rising and setting within a few minutes of that hour. On entering the hall we found our host, by whom we were kindly received. On the table stood a

large copper pot, filled with coffee, and provided with several cocks, together with cups, &c. to this it is usual for every one to repair, as soon as he leaves his hammock, and serve himself; and with this custom we complied: and, as the mornings and evenings, in this climate, are the most agreeable parts of the day, either for business or pleasure, in the open air, we employed about two hours in traversing the plantation, which had many fine walks of orange, lemon, and other fruit-trees; with agreeable arbours from the vines of granadilloes, water-lemons, grapes, Arabian jessamy, &c. besides a beautiful, ever-verdant garden, always stored, not only with tropical productions, but almost all the vegetables of Europe. We then returned to breakfast; the coffee we had before taken not being considered as such in this country.— At nine o'clock the tide again became favourable, and we continued our rout till between twelve and one, when

when we perceived ourselves opposite to an English plantation on which there was a funeral —As Mr. S—— and myself were both acquainted with its proprietor, we resolved to assist in discharging the last melancholy office of humanity to the deceased, though the tide still continued in our favour. I ever chuse to be present at these solemn occasions; which are apt for suggesting the most salutary reflections, and induce the mind to that humble, pious disposition, so pleasing to the Deity, and so useful to mankind; because it is incompatible with the commission of evil. But I ought to confess the painful sensations that I ever feel at these melancholy spectacles, these humiliating evidences of our mortality: indeed, this seems to be the effect of a sentiment impressed by the hand of nature on all the animal creation: as the beasts of the field, by howling and other emotions, betray their compunction at seeing the dead carcases of each other.—

At our landing we found the company ready to bear the dead body to its grave; the usual time of interment being near mid-day, and, therefore, joined the procession, which was directed to a part of the plantation appropriated to this use; there being, in this colony, no particular spot consecrated to receive the dead: but, though the deceased had several female relations, none attended us to the grave, nor was any woman visible the whole day (blacks excepted) the custom of the country requiring their seclusion on these occasions. As the deceased was a native of England, the funeral service of the English church was read at the grave, but by a person not in orders, none such being present: I could not, however, but approve this proceeding, notwithstanding its deviation from order; as the reflections it naturally suggested were, of all others, the most suitable to the solemnity for which it was used. This being over, we returned to
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the mansion-house, where a sumptuous entertainment was served up to all the company; at which the bottle was briskly circulated. You will, doubtless, be surprized at a practice so repugnant to all our ideas of decency and order, and one that has the appearance of being designed to dissipate grief and reflection by mirth and intoxication: the custom was, however, introduced by the difficulty that always attends the return of a part of the company, at least, to their own homes, on account of the opposite current, and rapidity of the tide, which made it convenient to provide for their entertainment; and it is now thought necessary to kill an ox, besides sheep and poultry, at each of these occasions. We discovered, however, by the sequel, how much this hospitable custom had been perverted; for the company, in a few hours, having drank immoderately, became riotous and quarrelsome.—Disgusted by a spectacle so brutal, I seized the first moment of the re-

fluent tide, and pursued my voyage as long as it continued favourable; and then again reposed ourselves, during the night, as we had done the preceding — The next day was Sunday, and, as a divine service was to be performed on a plantation at a little distance, we chose to repair thither, rather than pursue our course. There is no church in this part of the colony; some one of the clergymen, therefore, who are missionaries from the Dutch West India company, perform service, at stated periods, on the most considerable plantations only, and that by rotation, as it necessarily occasions a very considerable expence to the planter where it happens; as provision is always made to entertain the whole congregation, after service. This custom was introduced by the same cause that gave rise to funeral entertainments. The service, which was Calvinistic, except the difference of language, nearly resembled that of our Presbyterians in England. After it was
over,

over, we all sat down to a very spacious table (sumptuously furnished) the clergyman at the head, doing its honours; having previously delivered a very copious grace, or rather prayer. Our festival ended in extravagant scenes of mirth, to which the afternoon is devoted, there being no second service: and I must confess that, before my departure, I observed many things that appeared an irreligious perversion of an institution founded in piety and hospitality. But good and evil are, in some degree, blended, in the manners of all people; and even our own are far from being exceptions to the truth of this position.

The morning of the fourth day after leaving my own home, we found ourselves one hundred and fifty miles distant from the sea. Plantations became very unfrequent, and even the few that appeared had been deserted by the owners, who have made more advantageous settlements on

the fertile lands near the river's mouth. The fluent tides scarce prevailed against the natural descending streams; and, when we had proceeded a little farther, it no longer continued to ascend. We then found it necessary to quit our yacht, and substitute in its stead a less capacious vehicle, called a canoe, or, in this country, more frequently a *creaul*; which is formed from a hollow tree, and, being light and narrow, is pulled forward against the descending stream with great dexterity, by the Indians, who are habituated to this exercise from infancy: instead of oars they use *paddles* for this purpose, steering near the shore, to avoid the rapidity of the current. Before evening we had passed all the plantations settled by the civilized inhabitants of this country; and at night were, for the first time, obliged to repose ourselves in the uncultivated forests of Guiana. Our Indians, however, soon planted some forked sticks in the earth, over which
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they placed poles, at convenient distances, and covered the whole with *troolies* *, a leaf of a very extraordinary magnitude, being near thirty feet in length, and two and an half in breadth; and thus, in half an hour, they had compleated a house, which, to one who feels none but natural wants, is as serviceable as the superb mansion of a monarch. After kindling a fire in our new habitation, our Indians were sent on a hunting party: this is their natural and favourite employment; and they soon gave us an agreeable proof of their dexterity and aptitude for this exercise, by returning with a *wirrebocerra*, or deer, of the smallest but most delicious kind; and a *labba*, as it is termed by the Indians, whose flesh is, perhaps, the most delicate of all the animal creation. Part of this we boiled, agreeable to the Indian method of cookery, with salt,

* A particular description of this vegetable may be seen in Bancroft's Essay on the Natural History of Guiana.

red pepper, and water; the poison juice of the root of cassava, which is always preferred to the latter for this use, not being procurable: we likewise roasted a haunch of venison, and delivered the remainder to the Indians, with a bottle of rum; with which they soon became immoderately joyous, whilst we, feeding on our simple repast, and sitting on the earth before a fire of wood, and under a covering as simple as the rural cottages of the primæval inhabitants of the earth, enjoyed as much felicity as a prince at the most luxurious banquet, in the most gorgeous palace; and, perhaps, more, from the novelty of the scene. This being over, and our hammocks hung to the posts supporting our cottage, we composed ourselves to sleep, having a large fire between us; imitating, in this particular, the example of all the aboriginal natives of America, the ancient Germans, and all uncivilized nations, even the Corsicans at this day. The smoke proceeding from the fire
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proved disagreeable to our eyes and lungs, but this inconvenience was amply repaid by the preservation it afforded us from the bites of those swarms of musquitoes with which we were surrounded, and the noxious effects of a heavy dew, which renders the evenings in this climate particularly humid during the dry seasons.

The morning being come, we broke our fast with the remains of our evening's repast, and pursued our route, our progress being against the natural descending current of the river, as the tides no longer assisted us.—The banks on each side of the river appeared covered with trees and plants of different species and magnitudes, but all unknown in Europe; and even the use and properties of but very few of them, have been discovered by the present masters of this country, who are less attentive to the study of nature, than the acquisition of wealth. A great variety
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of birds, quadrupeds, and other animals, likewise appeared on the trees and banks of the river. Numerous and extensive flocks of parrots of various kinds flying over our heads, and many other beautiful species of the feathered tribe differing in their notes and plumage, either flying in the air, or resting on the boughs of the surrounding trees.—Deer and other animals either swimming to cross the river, or standing on its shores.—Apes passing with incredible dexterity and art from the slender branches of one tree to those of another. The sloth robbing a whole tree of its verdure for its subsistence, rather than change its situation, to which necessity alone can induce it, either through a constitutional indolence, or inaptitude for motion.—Serpents and snakes of various colours and species swimming on the water, creeping on the shores, or lodged in the boughs or branches of trees, im-
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pending even over our heads, and menacing an instant fall.

At noon we again landed ; and whilst our Indians were employed in hunting, we rambled into the wood, and supplied ourselves with various kinds of wild fruit, particularly the favory nut and ducolla apple, which are both produced spontaneously ; the former being the most tender and delicate of all nuts, and the latter the most delicious of apples.—Here we contemplated the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, every where visible in the various surrounding objects, discoverable in this immense, unexplored wilderness, whose every tree, shrub, and plant, affords an object hitherto unexamined, though meriting the highest attention. Good God! (thought I) if those minds which thou hast endowed with sagacity and perseverance, to explore the minutiae of thy works, to investigate and arrange the various species
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even of insects, so inconsiderable and unimportant to man, would transfer their attention to the numerous, but neglected productions of these pathless wilds, discover their properties, and their applicableness to the wants of humanity, how important would be their services to mankind? What various, what beautiful colours might not the dyer here obtain? With what efficacious remedies might not the *Materia Medica* be from hence enlarged? In short, what numerous and important articles might not be from hence obtained, for all the uses of life.—From these reflections, my eyes were again attracted by the novelty of the scene around me.—The immense number of nibbees, or ligneous vines of different kinds and magnitude, resembling the cables and ropes of ships, mounting to the tops of the highest trees, then descending, and again remounting other trees in various angles and directions, excited our attention;

tion; whilst the experience of the Indian taught us that some of them were the most fatal poisons, and as such to be cautiously avoided. It is from this species of vegetables, that the Indian arrow, a poison notorious for the celerity and fatality of its effects, is chiefly prepared: some of this was a few years since conveyed to Europe by Mr. De la Condamine, with which various experiments were made, and an account of them published in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society in London.—From the nibbees we were diverted by the various species of apes and monkies, which appeared on the branches of the trees, exhibiting the most ludicrous attitudes and gestures; some of these, on our offering to disturb them, would pluck the fruit from the trees, and let it fall on our heads, and even evacuate their urine that it might fall on us. We heard at some distance an assembly of the roaring black monkies of Guiana, to
which

which we directed our course, and found several hundreds of these animals seated contiguous to each other, on the branches of several adjoining trees. Sometimes they all united in the chorus together, at others, the disagreeable song was continued by one alone. But from the order and regularity observed at this assembly, I could not but presume that they really had a language perfectly intelligible to themselves, by which their ideas were distinctly communicated, and from which they shared all the pleasures of society. There is indeed abundant cause to believe, that every species of locomotive animals, has some faculty by which their ideas are in a more or less perfect degree conveyed to each other; and the numerous instances of sagacity, which are daily discoverable in the conduct of brutes, makes it apparent that we can, with no pretensions to justice, deny them the enjoyment of reason, in some (though an inferior

inferior) degree, and of that sentient principle which is termed a *soul*: and indeed I am fully convinced that our pride and arrogance have misled us to many unwarrantable conclusions, concerning the nature of brutes and the end of their creation. Whilst I was indulging these reflections, we were surprized by a large snake, whose scales were adorned with a variety of the most lively colours, beautifully and regularly disposed by the pencil of nature. These reptiles are, perhaps, more numerous in Guiana, than any other part of the earth; and almost every day affords instances of their hostile enmity to man, and contradicts that flattering opinion we so fondly indulge, of our importance in the sight of our Creator, and of his having formed every other terrestrial being for our partial convenience. I had no sooner discovered this snake, than I felt an irresistible propensity to accelerate its destruction, and, accordingly, seized on a long pole,

pole, with which I ended its life.—Our enmity towards this class of animals evidently results from a disposition naturally inherent in mankind; and a Deist, though he may deny it to have proceeded from the serpent's misconduct in Paradise, must, notwithstanding, acknowledge, that the author of the book of Genesis had, at least, studied nature in this particular, and discovered this to be a natural propensity, even in those early ages. During our ramble through the woods we had discovered several Indian habitations, but no towns; nor, indeed, are there any, worthy consideration, in Guiana; so much was Sir Walter Raleigh deceived in his idea of this country; his mighty emperor of Guiana, and his magnificent city *Del Dorado*, with all its pomp and splendour, having never existed; the Indians who inhabit the uncultivated parts of this country being distributed in families, according to the natural and most ancient practice of mankind,

kind, and inhabiting simple cottages, like that which our Indians every evening built for our reception; situated, generally, on some moderate elevation, near the rivers or the creeks that communicate with them. Nor are the aboriginal inhabitants of this country to be considered as numerous; all places inhabited by savages being ever thinly peopled, through their aversion to labour and the culture of the earth, without which no country can be populous; none being so abundant in game and fish, as to subsist a numerous people: it is, besides, to be remarked, that all but domestic animals fly from places that are populous. We could discover none but very small spots of earth cultivated by the Indians, and these produced nothing but red pepper, plantains, and cassava; from the last of which their bread is made, and also their *Piworree*, a fermented liquor, with which they sometimes regale themselves, when their providence has so far
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prevailed over their natural indolence, as to have engaged them to plant a sufficient quantity: but, even this small portion of agriculture which I have mentioned, is performed solely by the women, as well as all their domestic services: this was also the case among the ancient Germans, as it ever has been among all uncivilized nations; men, in a state of nature, not being disposed to forget their natural superiority, or exempt the fair sex from servitude, on account of their softness and effeminacy: it is the refinement of civilization that can only effect this.—On returning to our canoe, we found our Indians returned from hunting, with a sufficient stock of wild poultry, of different but excellent kinds, and several quadrupeds, called puccarara's, pretty much resembling hares, though somewhat inferior in the delicacy of their flesh. They had likewise brought several heads of excellent cabbage from the *cokar-eta* tree; from all which we soon provided a luxuri-

ous dinner, of several dishes, both roasted and boiled; which were followed by a desert of savoury nuts and ducolla apples. These being removed, we again embarked in our canoe, to pursue new adventures, still directing our course up the river, against the stream. At night we appeared to have made considerable progress; and our interpreter informed us, that we were nearly opposite to a small Indian village, or rather an assemblage of cottages, about half a dozen in number, inhabited by the different branches of a family of the Arrowauk tribe, and situated in the wood, near a small rivulet, about a mile from the river. Thither we resolved to repair, and pass the night in observing the manners of a people, who, having had but little intercourse with the civilized part of mankind, might be supposed in a state but little removed from that of nature. On our arrival at the mansions of these innocent people, we were received with that rustic bash-

bashfulness, and timid confusion, which might naturally be supposed to arise in the minds of those who had before scarce ever seen a white person, and yet with all the respectful civility that might be expected from persons who thought themselves honoured by the visit.—They were already assembled for the celebration of a nuptial ceremony, and had provided a large quantity of Piworree a liquor, made in no cleanly form, from the bread of cassava, fermented with water; and had, besides, killed a sufficient stock of venison, wild poultry, and other animals, for their feast. There was, however, no nuptial ceremony, except a festival, terminating in riot and disorder; contracts, notaries, priests, and witnesses, not being necessary to marriage by the law of nature. The parties had before cohabited, and, after trial, approving of each other, the festival was no more than an expression of joy among their friends.—Sir Thomas Moore, by his Utopian republic, seems

seems to have thought, not only cohabitation, but even a minute examination of the naked bodies of each other, necessary, previous to the celebration of marriage; judging it unreasonable, for those who will not purchase even a horse without the severest scrutiny, to conclude an engagement, of so much greater consequence to their peace and happiness, without this circumstance; especially as their apparel is so apt for concealing their mutual blemishes. But let me ask my heart, whether I could wish to subject—but I have promised not to name her—to this scrutiny?—No! there is a delicacy in the love of those whose sentiments have been refined by civilization, that is incompatible with a desire so gross.—But, to return to our Indian pair, neither of them appeared more than fourteen years of age; and the woman, if she could with propriety be so called, did not, I believe, exceed twelve years. It is, however, to be remarked, that all the inhabitants of tropical

countries soonest attain to puberty.—There is no law or obligation to confirm the nuptial engagements of these people; yet, nothing but a violation of the tenderest of all conjugal rights, ever produces an actual separation; the husbands are, indeed, tenacious of their rights after marriage, but the chastity of their wives, previous to that engagement, is far from being necessary; though they are not, indeed, offended at this circumstance, like the inhabitants of the Philippine islands.—When supper was prepared, we partook of it in common with the Indians, eating our food (which was contained in clay pots made by themselves) with spoons formed out of small long gourds, or calabashes, as they are here termed.—Willing to convince us of their hospitality, they often presented their piworree (contained in large calabashes) of which I often tasted, to avoid giving offence, though I would gladly have excused this officious civility; because I could not
forget

forget that, in making this drink, the women always chewed a part of the cassava bread to accelerate its fermentation. When the evening was far advanced, and the Indians sufficiently intoxicated, we retired to our hammocks; but were soon awaked from sleep by the cries of several Indian women, whose husbands were beating them, through jealousy, to which they have a constitutional propensity, created by a warm climate, augmenting the sensibility of the human frame, and producing impatience, suspicion, impetuosity of passion, and a desire of revenge. The Indians, however, always conceal their suspicions of infidelity in their wives, till intoxication prevails over their caution; when jealousy, their ruling passion, discovers itself by the chastisement which the women usually receive from their husbands on these occasions: but, when the pain of correction is over, they do not seem displeased with this conduct of their husbands; considering it,

like the women of Russia, as a proof of their love. There were several unmarried girls in this village, who appeared very pretty, notwithstanding their brown skins; and, when inflamed by the piworree, which prevailed over their natural timidity and bashfulness, they appeared not a little amorous and wanton. My companion, who had been familiarized to scenes like these, procured a bedfellow from among them; who suffered no disgrace with her countrymen by this indulgence, which, indeed, was not a venal prostitution, but a free, voluntary, and disinterested concession; as the Indian women, who have not been corrupted by their communication with the white inhabitants of this country, have conceived no idea of selling their favours to those for whom they have neither esteem nor inclination; nor of receiving pecuniary acknowledgments for concessions by which they are themselves equally gratified.

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The next morning we found an opportunity of viewing the habitations of our hosts, with their furniture and appendages: their houses were but the work of an hour, and similar to that which our Indians had erected the evening preceding the last. But yet they were sufficient to defend their inhabitants from the rains, the sun, and the dews, the only use of a house in this climate. All their domestic and culinary utensils did not exceed half a dozen in each cottage, and those of the most simple kind; yet these, with a small canoe, and their instruments of hunting and fishing, composed the sum of their earthly possessions, and were abundantly sufficient to supply all their wants, and afford peace, contentment and happiness. Ye deluded mortals, who sigh for the glare of pomp and title, the spendor and pageantry of wealth, and who are miserable because you cannot riot in luxury and profusion, with those unnatural enjoyments to which you

have falsely connected the idea of happiness, and to acquire which you toil with painful anxiety, and often perpetrate the most unnatural, the most enormous crimes, convert your attention to the poor Indian. See him naked, as when delivered from the hand of nature, satisfying his hunger with the fruits of the forest, and his thirst at the next brook, and finding his bed under every tree, with all his wants supplied. Or see him in his present more improved state; procuring a covering to his nudities from the bark that cloaths the trees; hunting the beasts of the forest for his subsistence; striking a fire with two stones, and boiling his food in an earthen pot, the work of his own hands; and afterwards reposing in a hammock made from the bark of a tree, under a covering of troolicks. See him in this state ignorant of your unnatural desires, with no wants but those which are satisfied without difficulty, pain, or toil, and free from
every

every incitement to vice ; and see him contented and happy. And will not this spectacle be sufficient to recall you from a mistaken pursuit of happiness, in paths where it is unattainable ? — We again found the Indians paid little attention to agriculture, as no more ground was planted among them, than might be annually tilled by a few days labour ; and that was appropriated solely to the production of bread, and vegetables, which supply its place ; in short, an appetite for animal food, with the facility of acquiring it, has made them all rather hunters than husbandmen. — As their wants are few, and those easily supplied, on account of the summer which constantly prevails here, and renders cloathing unnecessary, and the multitude of animals with which this wilderness is stored, and the facility with which they are hunted, joined to the plenty and variety of its spontaneous vegetable productions that are suitable for food, you

will easily conceive that the cares necessary to supply the demands of nature, can employ but a small portion of their time. Indeed they have abundant leisure, which is usually employed either in indulging their constitutional disposition to indolence, social mirth, or the pursuit of rustic diversions; no part being allotted to discover the uses and properties of the various productions of nature by which they are surrounded: and, if they have hitherto acquired any knowledge of these objects, it has been either suggested by accident, or discovered by necessity. Men are, indeed, never curious after knowledge, till they find it connected with sensual enjoyment; and, for this reason, an Indian can derive no pleasure from those discoveries which yield raptures of intellectual joy to an European, who knows their use and application to the happiness of life. I am, however, fully convinced, from what I have observed in the manners and customs of these

these people, that Mr. Rousseau's opinion of the primitive solitude of mankind is wholly erroneous; a social disposition appearing to have been impressed on them all by the hand of nature. Conjugal love and parental affection must have subsisted in the most early age of human existence; and these affections would, alone, have been sufficient to introduce a gregarious propensity, and to form mankind into a family-society, cemented by mutual love and advantage: and, indeed, this is the only kind of society at present existing among the aboriginal inhabitants of Guiana, notwithstanding all the fabulous accounts which have been propagated to the contrary: for, notwithstanding they form different tribes speaking different languages, yet no one or more of these have ever submitted to laws or magistrates for their government, and are, therefore, according to Mr. *Locke*, in a *state of nature*. But yet they do not experience those evils which we, in a state of

civilization, believe we have escaped by our social institutions. All enjoy the undivided blessings of the earth, and, whilst each pursues the suggestions of convenience or inclination, they are restrained from injuring each other, not only through fear of suffering violence in return, but by that repugnance to the misfortunes of others, and a love of justice, which are affections naturally impressed on our minds (notwithstanding the malevolence with which divines have charged our original dispositions, to the dishonour of the Deity) and which moderate the violence of self-love, and excite benevolence, and, in a state of nature, supply the want of laws, morality, and virtue. After duly observing the most curious particularities in the situation and conduct of these people, we took leave, and pursued our voyage till noon; when we found ourselves at the beginning of the cataracts of Demerary: these we resolved to ascend, but thought it most prudent to walk on the
banks

banks of the river, whilst our Indians transported the canoe over the rocks against the stream. The cataracts composed different *stadia*, extending several miles; but their descent was not very steep, nor the current irresistibly rapid, it being at present the dry season, when the water of the river is low at this distance from the sea. When we had accomplished the ascent we found the evening at hand, and, therefore, encamped ourselves, and passed the night much as we had done the first after leaving the plantations. In the morning we discovered ourselves on rocky, mountainous ground, much higher than any I had before ever trod in Guiana. After walking a little distance from the river, the country presented attractive scenes on every side; the trees branching with a free expansion, and the bold prospect surprizing, with the heath, the lawn, the mountain, and the valley, in wild variety. How beautiful (thought I) is nature; how various, how

lovely, even her wildest scenes? — The number and variety of curious stones, with which the hills were covered, made me lament my non-acquaintance with lythology; and the many appearances of minerals which we frequently discovered, occasioned a sensible regret for my having neglected their study, which might, doubtless, have been used with the greatest advantage on the present occasion; as no person who could pretend to any knowledge of these subjects, ever penetrated thus far in the interior part of this colony; which, from its situation and appearances, must, doubtless, be as fruitful in gold and diamonds, as the neighbouring mines of Brazil. Here we observed a great plenty of agates, of different colours, and many other beautiful stones of the siliceous class. — The trees, in general, were large, and of the most beautiful and valuable timber, such as letter wood, ducolla, bolla, purple, hart, &c. but the expence of transportation over the falls,

falls renders it but of little service to the civilized inhabitants.—The Indians inhabiting this part of the country are the most interior of all the tribes that have any intercourse with the Dutch in Guiana: they are not numerous, but are, however, much feared, on account of their insidious practices, and their unusual art in preparing and administering the most fatal poisons; but, like all the other Indians of this country, they greatly feared the white inhabitants; and, therefore, we apprehended no danger from their evil practices.—They appeared with a hole in the under lip, equal in size to a man's little finger, and filled with a cylindrical piece of wood, protruding a few lines beyond the surface of the lip: their nudities were partially covered, with pieces of blue linen, or of Indian *salempores*; which they receive from the Dutch, in exchange for slaves and other commodities. We bartered several trifles with them, for birds, monkies, gums, balsams,

balsams, and other natural productions of the country; and afterwards descended the Falls, with more expedition than we had mounted — By that time it was evening; and, having heard of a person born in Europe, who had abandoned the pleasures of civilized society, and retired among the Arrowauk Indians, and who then lived at an Indian village at some distance, I resolved to repair thither, and visit a person whose conduct was so extraordinary. Mr. Goldsmith somewhere observes, that “the discontented being who retires from society, is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience, and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind:” but, for the honour of humanity, I was unwilling to believe, that a man who had once enjoyed the advantages of civilization, would embrace a savage life, except from a severe disappointment in the tenderest of all passions, and the most interesting

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ing of all pursuits.—When we arrived at the village which was the habitation of this extraordinary person, we discovered numerous proofs of providential industry, to which I had been a stranger for several days. The village was situated on a sloping hill, sheltered by a tall, beautiful wood behind; in front was a small river, and beyond this appeared an open and extensive savannah, in which deer and other wild animals might be seen to feed at a great distance. On one side was a capacious garden, plentifully stored with various esculent plants, legumes, flowers, and fruits, happily arranged, and forming agreeable walks, arbours, and groves; on the other side lay a meadow, partly planted with cassava, yams, plantains, &c. and the remaining part always verdant with grass. This sudden transition to a place where industry had effaced the footsteps of nature, was a spectacle no where else to be discovered in this part of the country, and one that intelligibly

gibly announced the hand of civilization. In the center of the village was a large house, the roof and sides of which were covered with troolicks; and within it had, as we afterwards found, both floors and partitions, in which it differed from all other Indian houses; these were made from the thin, hard, external wood, or shell, of the manicole tree (a species of palm) commodiously dissected; the Indians having never learned the art of sawing boards. This was the habitation of the person to whom our visit was directed; and whom we discovered reading in the shade of a tree before his door. The sight of an European reading in the wilds of Guiana, where I imagined a book had never been seen, was both unexpected and agreeable; for, however insensible the mind may be of its social propensity, in a crowd, yet, in a place like this, it will find itself attracted by every human object, from which no hostile practices are feared.—Mr. Gordon,

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for that was his name, appeared surprized, but pleased with our visit, and received us with unaffected kindness. His person was well formed; but his face was marked with the lines of reflection: his address was short, but courteous, and he seemed rather to despise, than be ignorant of ceremony; having been formerly acquainted with the insincerity of politeness, and all the modes of civility; though, perhaps, he would have practiced them but awkwardly at present, from his habitual familiarity with the artless rusticity of Indian manners. His dress was exactly like that of the Indians, consisting only of a piece of linen cloth, disposed round his middle; his hair hanging in natural ringlets down his back.—I expressed some surprize, that he, who had once been accustomed to the use of cloaths, could now divest himself from all covering but that slender one which modesty imposed even on the Indians. To this he replied, that “ he had found cloaths entirely
useless

useless, in a country where an uninterrupted summer prevails; that, at first, the action of the sun on his naked skin, had not only proved disagreeable, but even excited blisters; but that he had, since, guarded against that effect, as well as against colds and the bites of musquito's, by smearing himself with the bitter oil of Caraba; and that his skin, being now familiarized to the rays of the sun and the action of the wind, he suffered no inconvenience from the want of cloaths; and, as it had been his invariable design to return, as near as might be convenient, to the primitive customs of mankind, he preferred nakedness; being convinced, that it would preserve him from the disorders of excessive perspiration, to which all the cloathed inhabitants of Guiana are exposed, and which is highly repugnant to longevity."—His wife (if I may so term one whose marriage was according to the laws of nature) soon after approached, with a beautiful child in her arms:

arms: she appeared about twenty-two years of age, and might justly be considered as a perfect brown beauty, in the primitive state of her sex, being as naked as when delivered from the hand of nature, except a single covering, a few inches square (wove from small beads, strung on cotton thread, and forming the appearance of flowers by their different colours) which was fastened at the upper corners by a string of coral beads passing round her waist, while the lower appeared depending before that part which modesty taught her to hide. On her wrists, ankles, above her elbows, and below her knees, were wound long strings of different coloured beads of glass, intermixed with those of coral, and also those made by the Caribbee Indians, from the white horns of animals, and the large bones of a particular fish. Her long, black hair was, at the same time, combed backwards, and hung loose down her neck. In this state, where no personal blemish could be concealed

cealed by drefs, nor a difagreeable perfon obfcured by the attraction of foreign ornaments, I had leifure to furvey her as ſhe really was; her limbs exquisitely proportioned and delicately turned; her body, rather tall and ſlender, but plump and round; her features regular, placid, and agreeable; and her ſkin, though brown, perfectly ſmooth, without the deformity of a ſingle pimple or eruption, to which the Indians are ſtrangers. In ſhort, her whole perfon, even in this natural, undisguifed ſituation, neceſſarily obtained my entire approbation. The child in her arms was of an intermediate colour, between the ſkin of an European and that of an Indian of the Arrowauk tribe.—The houſe was more extenſive and commodious than any that I had ſeen among the Indians, being partitioned into ſeveral apartments. The culinary and domeſtic utenſils were, however, but little more numerous or elegant than thoſe which we had obſerved in the cottages of the Indians. He had, moreover, a ſmall library
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of well chosen books, on history, philosophy, arts and sciences; a small collection of the most necessary simples in the *Materia Medica*; and a portable furnace, with utensils fitted for most of the operations of chemistry; as he employed a part of his time in experimental researches into that noble science.—After a few hours conversation, we became very intimate, and he not only appeared to be satisfied with my behaviour, but declared that he had conceived an esteem for me; a declaration that was particularly obliging, because he seemed averse from those unmeaning professions of regard so frequent in a state of civilization. I was led into a dark room, and made to observe an electrical apparatus, which was kept ceremoniously covered over; this, with some of the most surprizing phenomena of chemistry and natural magic, he gave me to understand, that he sometimes used among the Indians, to inspire them with a belief of his being possessed of an
unusual

unusual degree of knowledge, and a supernatural power; and in this, said he, I have succeeded to the extent of my desires, as even their Peii's, who unite in themselves the characters of priest and physician, have universally yielded me the superiority. I should not, however, continued he, be able to justify this deception to my own conscience, but for the integrity of my intentions herein; being fully resolved never to avail myself of the influence it has given me, to execute any dishonourable purpose, but always to convert it, not only to my own security, but to their advantage. The Indians who inhabited the village, he informed us, were the relations of the woman he had espoused, who fixed their habitations around him, and submitted their concerns to his direction. I asked, whether he had employed his influence over them to improve their morals? He answered, that he had, in those particulars where they were considerably defective; but these, he

said, were not very numerous. Sometimes, continued he, they are disposed to revenge an injury too severely, and this disposition I have endeavoured to repress; I likewise found them inclined to that improvidence which characterizes all uncivilized nations; mindful only of the present hour, and regardless of futurity: this disposition is not, indeed, attended with any considerable evils in this climate, except in one particular, that is, the want of bread, which naturally results from a neglect of agriculture; animal food being always procurable, as often as their appetites require it. I have, therefore, taken care to make them plant a sufficiency of cassava; but this provision is attended with one inconvenience, because it affords them the means of making Piworree, and indulging their propensity to intemperance; which I have had much difficulty to suppress. As to what you would consider as an improvement in their way of life, by increasing its conveniences, I have
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carefully avoided it; well knowing, that every new want, or convenience with which they are made acquainted, is a new tax on their happiness, which can only be paid with an increase of care and toil; and when these wants and conveniences, like those of civilized nations, are so numerous that they are not easily supplied or attained, they become the source not only of discontent and envy, but of the most powerful incitements to vice: I am, therefore, fully persuaded, that the virtue and happiness of these people, can only be secured by their present equality, simplicity, and ignorance. As for their religion, it is a subject with which I should never have intermeddled, had I not observed them oppressed with the most tormenting of all fears; that of the anger of certain demons (subordinate to the Deity) of whose existence they have no doubt, and who they believe to have both power and inclination to do evil; a belief which their Peii's assiduously confirm,

firm ; teaching them to attribute all the ills of life to these demons, or Yowahoos, as they are termed in the Indian language ; and, at the same time, persuading them to believe, that they themselves are the favourites of those Yowahoos, and possessed of sufficient influence with them, either to avert their displeasure from any particular object, or draw down their anger on whomsoever they please ; and, as all this is firmly believed by the Indian laity, they are tormented not only with the fear of these demons, but of their supposed favourites, the Peiis also, and oppressed by religious tyranny ; which is, of all others, the most intolerable. Moved with compassion for the sufferings of these deluded people, I resolved to undeceive them, if possible, and to sap the foundation of their subjection to the Peiis, by destroying their belief of the existence of these demons : the Peiis were, however, alarmed at my attempt,

and opposed it with all their art: the Indians were instructed to ask me from whence their misfortunes proceeded? and to declare that it could not be from the Deity, who was too good to injure them; and that evil must, therefore, necessarily proceed from a different source, which could be no other than these Yowahoos, whose existence I denied. I told them, that their opinion of the goodness of the Deity was just, and that all his moral attributes were undoubtedly included in that of benevolence; and that, whatever things would ultimately produce the most general good to his creatures, those he invariably dispensed among them: but that their notion of evil was chimerical; as there never was an accident, that could deserve that name, however unfavourable or afflicting it might appear to individuals, whose observation was confined to a single link of the great chain of being: that, to suppose the Deity omnipotent and good,
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and yet suppose him permitting any subordinate beings, whether the devils of Christians, or the Yowahoos of Indians, to introduce evil among his creatures, was absurd; and that, if ever he did suffer the commission of evil, he must either not have power to prevent it, or he must be satisfied with it; and therefore, if, as we believe the Deity is all powerful and good, there cannot possibly be in life any one dispensation (however unfavourable its appearance may be to an individual) which does not promote universal good: and that, therefore, to conclude for the existence of these Yowahoos, because the Deity himself was too good to distribute evil, was highly unreasonable. I found, however, that they were far from being satisfied with these arguments. It was impossible for them to separate the idea of evil from the sufferance of pain, disease, want, hunger, &c. or to conceive why universal happiness could not

have been rendered compatible with an exemption from these sufferings; and, judging it more likely that the Deity should *permit*, than *do* evil, they still adhered to their belief of the existence of these Yowahos, and of the influence which their Peiis pretend to have over them; and, consequently, are still harrassed by religious tyranny: of which you may see a proof this evening, by the exorcism which will then doubtless be again repeated, over an Indian now sick, to appease the supposed anger of a Yowahoo. After this conversation, we took a turn in the garden, at a little distance from his house; a part of which consisted of shady walks, formed by various rows of fruit-trees, such as oranges, lemons, limes, citrons, shaddocks, guavas, mammec apples, avegato pears, &c. The spaces in a line between these trees, were filled with several species of ananas, or pine-apples, particularly a red kind, which I believe
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are unknown in Europe; and also a small, but delicious kind, which, indeed, grow spontaneously on most of the sandy hills in this country; the ends of the several walks terminated in arbours of the vines of granadilloes, water-lemons, and grapes; particularly that beautiful blue kind, which I have seen among the drawings of Mrs. —, in the British Museum: the other part was an extensive kitchen-garden, stored with most of the European, as well as tropical productions, which usually make a part of human nourishment. From this, he told us, he usually extracted the means of subsistence; religiously abstaining from all animal food: I say religiously, because it was from a persuasion of the injustice, cruelty, and insalubrity of feeding on flesh; and we found that, though he procured from the Indians of the village a sufficient stock of animal food for our entertainment, he would by no means partake of it him-

self.—About ten o'clock in the evening the exorcism, which Mr. Gordon had mentioned, began in the cottage of the sick Indian; and, a little before twelve, he accompanied us to the place; where we listened to hear what passed within. The Peii was alone with his patient, having darkened the room, and continued incessantly shaking a calabash, or gourd, filled with Peii-stones, or white agates, together with a particular kind of seeds; and, at the same time, repeating an incantation to the Yowahoo, delivered in an unintelligible jargon. Twelve o'clock is the hour at which the demon delivers his responses to these invocations, unless it rains; in which case the whole exorcism is fruitless for that night: but as that accident did not intervene on this occasion, we heard, about the hour of twelve, an apparently distinct voice, seeming to proceed from an adjacent wood, and forming articulate sounds; which

which continued for half a minute, and then entirely ceased, and the Peii immediately discontinued his incantation; making such a report of the answer as he thought the event of his patient's disorder was most likely to justify. But Mr. Gordon informed me, that, to avoid the danger of an erroneous prognostic, it was always delivered either in ambiguous or doubtful terms, till the patient was evidently recovering; and that, when he happened to die, the Peii, to save his reputation, attributed his ill success either to an unusual degree of enmity in the Yowahoo towards the deceased, or to machinations of some other Peii who was his enemy, and opposed all his endeavours for his relief: and he added, that they were so apt to attribute all unfortunate accidents to the malice of an offended Peii, that, if one among them should be hurt by a fall, or wounded by an axe or knife, and could recollect that he had at any time

past (however distant) denied a particular Peii any favour, or refused to give him any thing in his possession (a piece of temerity of which they seldom dared be guilty) he would instantly refer the accident to his displeasure operating with some Yowahoo for his destruction, and both the suffering person and his friends would immediately employ the most likely expedients to appease his anger. How wretched, added he, is the condition of a people reduced by religious chimeras to a servitude like this!—I enquired of Mr. Gordon, whence that distinct voice which we had heard could proceed? But this, he told me, he could not explain. He said, he was, indeed, sure it must be the effect of some artifice in the Peii, which he had never been able to detect; and added, that it was a circumstance, which had not only converted many of the negro slaves in the colony to a belief of the existence of these demons, but

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had even staggered the faith of many of the white inhabitants, particularly those whose knowledge is confined; it being an universal truth, that ignorance is the parent of credulity and superstition.—After retiring to rest, I could not but reflect on this subject.—Alas! thought I, how ought we to deplore the imbecility of our boasted reason, which, like an *ignis fatuus*, but lights us astray, whilst brutal instinct more certainly points out the paths of truth and happiness. These deluded people adore a wicked divinity, not for his good, but evil; a divinity disposed to injuries, yet appeaseable by the bribery of adoration; to him, therefore, all their homage, all their supplications are directed; whilst the worship of the supreme God is wholly neglected, because he is thought too benevolent to injure them: thus their religion appears to be founded wholly in fear; and I wish that principle may not have a greater

effect on the morals of Christians, than is generally suspected. If it is allowable to form an opinion from appearances, I doubt not but, on exploring the causes which influence those among you who appear replete with piety and devotion to the Deity, many, even of these, would be found to attend the services of religion, not from love or gratitude to the Deity, for his goodness in their creation and preservation; but to have been impelled to duty by the fear of future punishments, or bribed to it by the hopes of future rewards; and yet what merit will the Deity allow to actions that result from these selfish motives, which, in one instance, are as despicable as those that influence the coward; and, in the other, as sordid as those which govern the usurer, who is induced to part with a sum of money in expectation of receiving it again with extravagant interest. All human actions proceed either
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from the love of ourselves, or of others; the first of these passions is denominated self-interest; the latter is virtue: but this has no share in those religious duties which we perform to escape future misery, or attain future happiness; nor can they be considered as virtues, or pleasing to the Deity. Why, then, will divines continue incessantly to denounce the vengeance of heaven, and the torments of hell, against their vicious hearers: as if they could be frightened to heaven; instead of inciting them to virtue by the more amiable motives of love and gratitude to their beneficent Creator? —As to the real existence of these demons, I had not the least disposition to believe it, the whole doctrine appearing obviously absurd; and yet, upon reflection, I discovered a great similitude between the notions of the Indians on this subject, and the ideas that are commonly entertained of devils by us Christians, especially the more ignorant:

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we do not, indeed, imitate the Indians, by making them objects of our adoration; and, for that reason, our priests do not, like theirs, pretend to an influence, or at least, not to a friendly intercourse with them; but, in return for this, they would persuade us to believe (what is of more advantage to themselves) that they are the peculiar favourites and ambassadors of the Deity; by which they have heretofore acquired a most extensive influence over the Christian laity, and reduced them to a more abject and shameful servitude than ever the Indians have suffered; and though the revival of learning in Europe has, in a great degree, delivered us, especially the reformed, from spiritual shackles, our freedom is not yet perfect.—Have not you, my brother, when ordained to the services of religion, been vested with a power of forgiving the most enormous crimes, with this assurance, that “whose-
soever

soever sins you remit, they are remitted in heaven; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained in heaven?"—I am disposed to be as orthodox as the exercise of my reason will permit; but, when I reflect that we are children of the same parents, and that I have no such power of absolution, I cannot believe this spiritual disparity between us, notwithstanding the sanctity of your life and morals; how, then, can I allow it to those whose misconduct reproaches that religion of which they are teachers? And I will venture to appeal to your own conscience, whether you really possess the power in question? If not, would it not be prudent to disclaim all pretensions to it, rather than expose our faith to these severe and dangerous trials. In matters of religion, every doubt introduces others, and they follow successively, till we are involved in the mazes of scepticism. Let not our spiritual guides, therefore,

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continue, by these obstacles, to lead us to infidelity. You will, I doubt not, pardon the honest freedom of these reflections, as they are naturally suggested by the circumstances which had lately occurred to my observation, and are delivered through no distrust of the evangelical doctrines of Christianity; which I have embraced, not from the prejudice of education, but from the approbation of that reason which Heaven has allotted me, to distinguish truth from falsehood.—When I informed you that Mr. Gordon abstained from the use of animal food, I ought likewise to have added, that he avoids all kinds of spirituous liquors, as the corrupters of health and morals, using only water, the natural drink of mankind, as well as of all other animals.—The ensuing morning a part of the Indians of the village made a hunting party at some distance; and, as they did not expect to return till the next day, they took
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with them, in their canoes, their wives, children, dogs, bows, and arrows, and their culinary and domestic utensils, which made the whole of their property ; but the smallness of its inventory does not, in any degree, impair their happiness. The scantiness of their possessions diminishes the circle of their cares ; and the fewness of their wants, with their ignorance of more refined enjoyments, leave them contented and happy in their present state, free from those unnatural desires which can only be gratified by an increase of toil and anxiety ; so that they may justly adopt the motto of the Franciscans, *nihil habentes, sed omnia possidentes*.—I enquired of Mr. Gordon, whether he believed these people capable of loving with the same ardour as the inhabitants of more civilized countries ? “ If (replied he) love, as Mr. Hume has defined it, is composed of a complacency in beauty, friendship, and a bodily appetite, I am
sure

sure they have all the requisites to inspire this passion with equal force; and, as the distinctions of rank and fortune have created no unnatural disparity between individuals of each sex, they have this peculiar felicity, that their inclinations are never opposed, or their wishes and happiness disappointed, by the preposterous views which ambition or interest produce in civilized nations."

During my stay with Mr. Gordon, which was near two days, I was able, from his candour and sincerity, to attain some knowledge of his true character: I found his knowledge extensive, and his sentiments, though singular in many instances, had, in general, been corrected by judicious reflection; but were not always confined to a conformity with the doctrines of revealed religion, or those opinions which generally prevail in civilized countries, but
appeared

appeared, on every subject, to have suffered his thoughts to extend themselves in their natural course, unrestrained by the shackles which education and custom universally impose. My attention was naturally attracted by the singularity of his life and manners, and I felt a strong curiosity to know the motives which could have determined him to renounce civilized society, and sequester himself in the woods of Guiana, among its aboriginal, untutored inhabitants: I took the liberty of expressing my curiosity on this subject; to which he has promised an ample gratification, thro' the medium of an epistolary correspondence, which he is soon to commence.

After having observed the most curious objects which this village afforded, we took leave of Mr. Gordon, for whom I had already conceived a friendship, and descended the river towards my own plantation, where

where we arrived in three days; and thus finished a most instructive rural excursion, without which I should never have conceived a just idea of a state of nature, and the numerous deviations therefrom, which social refinement has introduced. In this tour I had occasion to remark, that, making a small allowance for the influence of climate, the different degrees of refinement, not of distance in situation, produce the characteristic distinctions among mankind; who vary from each other only in proportion to their approaches towards perfect civilization. Improvidence and rapacity distinguish savage nations, in whatever climate they are situated; whilst politeness, and urbanity of manners, characterize the people of more luxurious and refined countries, confounding their original peculiarities, and maintaining the semblance of every virtue, with the reality of few. But, though we, who have been habituated to the conveniencies

veniencies and luxuries which a state of civilization affords, could not easily confine our desires to the narrow circle of enjoyments which are attainable in a state of nature; yet the ease, simplicity, and freedom of a savage life have many charms, of which I found myself not insensible. On the score of virtue, perhaps, each state is nearly equal; if the latter has fewer temptations to evil, neither has it those restraints from vice, which religion, morality, and literature create. In short, every kind of life has peculiar advantages as well as evils: fraud and perfidy prevail in civilized nations; intemperance and barbarity with those who inhabit deserts: the vices of the former are more numerous; those of the latter more enormous.

I have just perused my letter, which I find immoderately extended, and, in many parts, wrote in a stile that requires apology;

logy; it has, indeed, been chiefly copied from the journal of my late tour, which has led me insensibly to retain the language in which it was hastily penned.—To you I must resign the charge of expressing my dutiful sentiments to my mother; and am,

Dear brother,

your, &c.

Rio Demerary,
August, 1765.

CHARLES WENTWORTH.



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.